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## The Standard of Living in 1860

THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PRESS  
CHICAGO, ILLINOIS

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THE  
Standard of Living  
IN 1860

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*American Consumption Levels  
on the Eve of the Civil War*

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BY EDGAR W. MARTIN



THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO PRESS  
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## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

#### THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STANDARD OF LIVING

*The nature of economic history.*—The function of the economic order—of any economic order—is to get goods produced and distributed among consumers, and the measure of success of the economic order is the level of consumption it makes possible.

This is not to say that economic considerations are the only important ones. We can imagine a society so organized as to produce goods in abundance and distribute them equitably, yet oppressive to the human spirit. But such a society, unless it bore within itself the seeds of a progressive deterioration in productive effectiveness, would be entirely successful viewed purely *as an economic order*. However important these other considerations may be, they do not come within the scope of economics as it is usually understood. For economics is, essentially, an analysis of the effectiveness with which resources necessarily limited in amount are combined in the production of goods to satisfy the limitless wants of consumers.

Economic history is an extension of this analysis through time:

The object of economic history is to show how scarce or insufficient means have been used for human ends throughout the ages; how the character of this problem has changed or “developed”; what these situations and changes in them have been due to; how they have reacted upon other sides of human life and human society. As far as I can see, this covers the whole field, and nothing but the field, of economic history.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Eli Heckscher, “Quantitative Measurement in Economic History,” *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, LIII (1939), 167–68. Heckscher goes on to say: “The application of such a program becomes, of course, extremely different in different hands, and it leaves room for very different ideologies or views with regard to the deciding factors of social life and social change; but this problem comes later and need not concern us here. Here it is enough to state that our object is the same as that of studying present-day economic life ‘in being,’ with one extremely important qualification, i.e., the addition of social change.”

If we accept this as our objective, our immediate problem is to find out how people actually were using "scarce or insufficient means . . . for human ends" at various times in the past; then, if possible, to fit these glimpses into a pattern of continuous historical development—to explain how and why the level of consumption changed and why it changed where and when (and at the rate) it did. A more detailed knowledge of the economic life of earlier times ought also to make it easier to discover the connection between the functioning of the economic order and other aspects of human activity. It ought to aid us in understanding the relationship of the economic order to the form of political organization and to the framework of social institutions. It ought to throw light on the problem of relating material well-being to culture generally—to artistic creativeness and intellectual achievement and to human happiness.

*The problem of measurement.*—It is these latter problems—problems of a more speculative order—which appeal most to the imagination. I do not wish to minimize their importance or to suggest that consideration of them be postponed until we have assembled more facts about the past. What I am suggesting is that those of us who are not competent to deal with these more philosophical problems should not despair of making some contribution to their solution: anything we can discover about the past will aid the philosopher in interpreting it. I do not need to emphasize the inadequacy of our knowledge of earlier levels of material well-being. Our historians have told us much about the lives of the rich, the well-born, the politically powerful; but only rarely have they aided us in understanding the lives of the much greater number of ordinary people. It should be one objective of the economic historian to forestall too hasty conclusions based on misconceptions of the life of the people as a whole. This he can do by making available as much information as he can assemble about the level of consumption and the framework of economic organization in earlier times.

If we are to approach economic history by way of the standard of living, how are we to measure economic progress? Can we reduce the standard of living (or, more properly, the *level* of liv-

ing)<sup>2</sup> at any one time to an index number and focus our attention on the trend of these index numbers? Our desire to be "scientific," to avoid vagueness and abstraction, makes this tempting. Such index numbers, however, become meaningless if comparisons are to be made between levels of living widely separated in time or space: qualitative differences are as significant as quantitative differences. What sort of index number could we use to compare the level of living in 1860 with that of 1940? In 1860 there were no telephones, radios, electrical refrigerators, washing machines, vacuum cleaners, or electric lights, no automobiles and no hard-surfaced roads. The list of consumers' goods which are in common use now but were not available to anyone in 1860 is a long one, and expenditures on these goods now make up a large part of consumers' expenditures. I see no way around this difficulty. I have made as much use as possible of quantitative data,<sup>3</sup> but the greater part of the material presented in the following pages is descriptive rather than statistical. The historian has to utilize a great deal of information which cannot be expressed in measurable units, and this is much more true of an earlier period than of the present.

It must be confessed that this is a rather discouraging prospect. We have to talk about economic "progress," and yet we cannot measure it. I suspect that this is why economic historians have largely devoted their pages to the people as producers, not as consumers. The usual economic-history textbook can tell the reader much about the organization of production; but it tells him little about the effectiveness of that organization, even as measured in terms of material well-being. Nevertheless, an accurate knowledge of the level of consumption of all classes of the population is a prerequisite to the understanding even of the

<sup>2</sup> The term "standard of living" is frequently used as an expression of what *ought to be*. As such it depends upon, but is to be distinguished from, the actually existing level. In the chapters which follow I shall use the terms "level of living" or "level of consumption" interchangeably to mean the actual level and "standard of living" only when I wish to emphasize the normative aspect.

<sup>3</sup> Not only is much desirable statistical data for earlier periods completely lacking, but much of that which is available is of doubtful reliability. I have frequently included with such data my impression as to what confidence is to be placed in them.

recent history of one's own country. The economic historian must do the best he can, using such statistical data as are available and have meaning, but more often simply describing how people have lived at different times and at different places. Such descriptions can make evident, perhaps even vivid, progressive changes in the level of living.

Our general knowledge cannot be regarded as a satisfactory substitute for considered description. A person is familiar with the level of living of his own class in his own time; he knows little about living conditions in the past and frequently is surprisingly ignorant even about the lives of his contemporaries in higher- or lower-income groups. If we assume for the past a level of living higher than actually existed—if, for example, we fail to realize how large a proportion of the people in this country were living in one-room log cabins even as recently as 1860—we underestimate the material progress our economic order has made possible;<sup>4</sup> it is equally possible to err in the opposite direction.

#### THE PURPOSE OF THIS BOOK

*The year 1860.*—It is my wish to make some contribution to an understanding of economic history by describing the level of living at one time and place—the United States on the eve of the Civil War. If I can make clear what that level was, anyone who is interested can evaluate for himself the significance of subsequent changes. It would have been much more interesting and much more valuable if I could have made, as I went along, comparisons with the level of living at some earlier date—possibly at the end of the “Colonial period.” But to do this I should have had to devote as much time to research into this earlier period as I did to research into conditions in 1860; this I have not had time to do. When material for making such comparisons has been easily available I have used it; otherwise attention has been directed solely to the period under consideration. There is less need for comparing consumption in 1860 with that at a later date, for one's general knowledge of the present can be

<sup>4</sup> We cannot say, of course, that it was the institutions of this economic order which “caused” such material progress.

supplemented by the abundant information easily available. A comparison in quantitative terms with the present would also be less useful because of the greater changes which have taken place in the range of articles consumed.

There are several reasons for choosing the year 1860. For one thing, it marks the close of the "middle period" in American history, and it is customary to break up American economic history into much the same periods as have been used in the exposition of American political and social history. By choosing the year 1860 as the subject for our study we can see what progress had been made in satisfying human wants by the end of this middle period.<sup>5</sup>

My own interest is in this year as a terminal point in *economic* history. One does not need to accept the interpretation of the Civil War as marking the victory of industrial capitalism over planter capitalism, popularized by Charles and Mary Beard and by Louis M. Hacker, to discover in that war the end of one period and the beginning of another. The war ended, in form at least, Negro slavery and changed the whole economic pattern of one section of the country. The war itself, as I shall have occasion to point out repeatedly, had a marked effect in stimulating the mass-production industries, which up to that time had been almost nonexistent. The production of standardized commodities—particularly foodstuffs and clothing—for the hundreds of thousands of soldiers made it possible for industry to take advantage of the new technology. The accumulation of fortunes from war profits made possible capital expansion, as did also the increasing use of the corporate form of business organization, with its capacity for enlisting the savings of small investors. Many other factors contributed to this growth of industrial capitalism, including the higher tariffs of the post-war period, the immigration of unskilled workmen, the increase in population, and its growing urbanization. The population had a large pur-

<sup>5</sup> Most of my material relates to the whole period of a decade or so before the Civil War. When it is possible to select a specific year, I have chosen 1860, which is not only the last year before the outbreak of hostilities but was a "normal" year—recovery from the panic of 1857 was nearly complete, but there was no boom.

chasing power (itself partly the result of the growing industrialism) and displayed a singular readiness to consume standardized products.

After the Civil War, then, the pattern of steady though slow development in all spheres of economic life suddenly lost its uniformity. It is an oversimplification to say that before the Civil War the economic organization was characterized by farming and by production in the home and in small mills and workshops and that after the war production was concentrated in large factories, which used large amounts of capital and hired for wages urban workers who had no other occupations and no property of their own. Yet such simplifications, if one is careful to remember their limitations, can be highly useful in understanding what changes were taking place. It is important that we should be clear as to what level of living had been made possible by the older, less industrialized, economy.

There are no real revolutions in economic organization, and we cannot expect to find any one year in which there was a radical change in all phases of economic life. The year 1860 marks no definite turning-point in immigration, in urbanization, in transportation; even in industry the production on a large scale of standardized commodities was not wholly an innovation. This raises interesting problems: What use had the economy made of the large number of immigrants who had come over before 1860, and how did their level of consumption compare with that of the older stock? What light does the growing size of cities throw on urban living conditions as compared with those in rural areas? What effect had the railroads and steamboats had upon consumption, and how much higher would the level of consumption have been if there had been still better transportation facilities?

*The scope of the study.*—I have included, as essential to a complete picture, all the things on which people spent their money in 1860, either directly or through government expenditures. This includes both "necessities" and "luxuries," both goods and services; it includes expenditures for education, for recreation, for religious and charitable enterprises. It includes, in other



words, all the things which make use of those limited resources—human resources, natural resources, and capital—with which economists are concerned. It seems to me that this breadth of scope requires no justification: If resources are used for one thing, the same resources cannot be used for some other thing—if people contribute to foreign missions, the missionaries themselves are automatically removed from the numbers of those producing goods for home consumption. It is true that such expenditures as these probably had little effect upon the level of consumption, and for that reason I have given them little space. In general, I have tried to allocate the space devoted to the various elements of consumption in accordance with their importance in the family budget.

I have also thought it best, in an exploratory study of this sort, to include all classes of the population and all sections of the country,<sup>6</sup> being comprehensive rather than detailed. This makes my problem more complicated, since the level of consumption of the country as a whole cannot be reduced to a single average or type. The consumption of the rich differed from that of the poor, that of the urban dweller from that of the farmer or villager, and there were significant differences in living conditions in different parts of the country. Most of my information has come from sources so general as to preclude any precise classification of the various consuming groups, but some sort of distinctions must be made.

For the sake of simplicity in exposition I have grouped the states and territories into three geographical areas: the North, the South, and the Frontier. None of these can be defined rigidly (Pennsylvania, for instance, was certainly not a frontier state, yet millions of its acres were still uninhabited).<sup>7</sup> The line

<sup>6</sup> While I have included the slave population, I have excluded the Indians, who had little effect upon the rest of the economy. Little space has been given to military and trading posts and to such groups as traders and trappers. On the other hand, I have given more space to frontier conditions than the proportion of the frontier population to the rest of the population would justify. Not only were there wide variations in frontier living conditions, but the contrast between the Frontier and the more settled areas is a help in understanding how much "progress" there had been in the East.

<sup>7</sup> Cf. Charles Manfred Thompson and Fred Mitchel Jones, *The Economic Development of the United States* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1939), p. 234.

dividing the North from the South, as I have drawn it, runs along the Ohio River and the southern edge of Pennsylvania. This puts Missouri in the North, Delaware and Maryland in the South—a classification which can be justified only as a matter of convenience. All the country lying to the west of Wisconsin, Iowa, Missouri, Arkansas, and Louisiana I have called the "Frontier."<sup>8</sup> From time to time I have departed from this pattern to use other geographical groupings called for by the circumstances.

The United States was still predominantly rural in 1860. New York City, with 805,651 inhabitants, and Philadelphia, with 565,529, were the biggest cities; and the eight largest cities—New York, Philadelphia, Brooklyn (then a separate city), Baltimore, Boston, New Orleans, St. Louis, and Chicago—had a combined population of only 2,500,000—about a twelfth of the total. Only an eighth of the population lived in cities of 8,000 or more inhabitants. Since most of the population was rural, we should be especially interested in living conditions on the farms, while we should be interested in city life chiefly by way of contrast and for the light it throws on underlying forces. Although information concerning farm life is hard to find, where the level of consumption was significantly different I have tried to give separate consideration to the "urban" and "rural" populations; only rarely has it seemed worth while to make such additional distinctions as "small town."

For the most part I have described the members of the population as being of the "well-to-do" or of the "poor" or laboring class. The information available does not permit of careful definition of even these two groups, and both terms have been used rather loosely.<sup>9</sup>

*Leisure in 1860.*—A special importance attaches to the matter

<sup>8</sup> This is primarily on the basis of density of population (see Appen. A, Table 14). With the exception of Florida and Arkansas, all the states and territories I have classified as "Frontier" had populations of less than ten to the square mile.

<sup>9</sup> Since I have used a considerable amount of price data in the text and in the appendixes, I have included, as Appen. B, a section on "Incomes in 1860," without which the price data could have little meaning. I have not, however, tried to define "well-to-do" or "poor" in terms of income received; see also pp. 393-94.

it from over the archway of the gate. The simple lines and clean whiteness of the chorten made a marked contrast to the very drab, yet overdecorated Chinese pagoda of baked mud on the shore behind us. Upriver, a high mountain projected from the range that extended along the northeastern horizon. About halfway up its almost vertical face, we could just make out a horizontal line of one-story, boxlike buildings, with a massive, equally square structure in the center. All were white, with a strip of red painted around the upper portion, looking clean and severely plain at this distance.

Even before the steersman told me what it was, I recognized it as a lama temple. Both the buildings and their choice of location looked very Tibetan, as indeed they were; for the Mongols, when they borrowed the Lama religion from the Tibetans, three centuries ago, had absorbed a lot of foreign cultural elements along with it. Without having visited this particular temple, I knew from previous travels in eastern Inner Mongolia and along the borders of Tibet that the interior of this lama shrine would have gilded images, vividly colored paintings, and fine, brocaded hangings.

"Any chance of stopping for some pictures"? asked Walter Hill, an amateur photographer. His question echoed my own thoughts. I was eager to see the place, and have the others see it, as an introduction to Mongolia. Unfortunately, the steersmen said it was some distance off the main road, down a dubious ox-track where we might get stuck in the sand, and we had already been delayed long enough in the long journey from Chungking. For the time being, we had to be content with this distant view.

When the ferry grounded on the far bank, and the doctor—who doubled as alternate truck driver—got the six-by-six safely ashore, we had a long wait. It would be some time before the other scow arrived with our trailer and the extra crates of gear, unloaded to lighten the truck. Meanwhile, leaving two men to guard the truck, the rest of us who had come over on this trip walked up past the small inn-buildings that made up the "village" of Shang-tu-k'ou, to see the chorten and the gate.

We found the chorten ruined. Chinese soldier-bandits had torn off the gold-plated finial atop its slender spire, and had smashed in the front of it to steal the small handful of offerings included with its holy relics. This was a foretaste of what we were to find all too often in Inner Mongolia, where border Chinese with guns have taken

*why* and *how* they have taken place. If the level of living was higher in 1860 than it had been earlier, why was it higher? And why wasn't it higher still? Was the economy making full use of the resources and the technology then at its disposal? These are difficult questions. The authors of *America's Capacity To Consume* could claim no high degree of accuracy for their estimates of what could have been produced at the time they were writing, despite all the material available to them. The making of any satisfactory estimate as to what *might have been produced* in 1860, as compared with what *was* produced, is probably impossible; in any case it would take me away from my primary object. I have, however, tried to explain in general terms why the level of consumption was what it was—the forces tending toward raising the level and the circumstances which stood in the way of greater increases. At times I have been unable to resist the temptation to point out where I think the level could have been higher than it was, with the resources then available.

Finally, since this is an essay in *American* economic history, I have tried to discover whether there was anything distinctive about the "American" standard of living. Was it higher than other standards, was it lower, or was it just different? I think there were some distinctive features about the American standard of living; but I also think that the greater importance Americans have attached to the standard of living is much more significant than any differences in the standard itself. The raising of the standard of living has come to be regarded as the great goal of national policy, but the premises underlying that belief have seldom been examined critically.

## CHAPTER II

### THE PRODUCTION OF FOODSTUFFS

#### FOOD AND THE BUDGET

*Expenditures for food.*—Of all the commodities and services which it is the function of the economic order to provide, food is the most important. Studies of family budgets leave no room for doubt on this point. The National Resources Committee has estimated that in the year 1935–36 about a third of all expenditures made by American families were for food; for the two-thirds of the families with the lowest incomes something over two-fifths of all expenditures were for food.<sup>1</sup>

There were no such budgetary studies made for the fifties; but the few estimates that were made (which may or may not be typical) seem to indicate that an even larger proportion of family income was spent for food before the Civil War—as, indeed, one would expect. A budget in the *New York Tribune* for May 27, 1851, cited by Richard O. Cummings,<sup>2</sup> indicates the allocation of the weekly expenditures of a Philadelphia family of five: of the \$10.37½ total, \$4.26½ (41 per cent) went for food. Other estimates, not cited by Cummings, would not change the proportions very much. The *New York Times* printed a “standard workingman’s budget” for New York City, in 1853, supposed to apply to a laborer, his wife, and two children, “living moderate-

<sup>1</sup> National Resources Committee, Industrial Committee, *Consumer Expenditures in the United States; Estimates for 1935–1936* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1939), Tables 5A and 7A, pp. 78–79. For the lowest third (incomes under \$780 a year) 42.9 per cent of total expenditures were for food; for the middle third (incomes from \$780 to \$1,450) 38.2 per cent went for food; and for the highest third (incomes of \$1,450 and over) 29.0 per cent went for food. For the population as a whole, 33.6 per cent of total expenditures were for food.

<sup>2</sup> *The American and His Food* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1940), p. 242. This and the other budgets mentioned in the paragraph are given in full in chap. xiii, below.

ly." Of the total annual expenditures of \$600.00, groceries accounted for \$273.00, or 45.5 per cent. *Hunt's Merchants' Magazine* estimated in 1857 that a New York businessman, with an annual income of \$1,500.00, would spend \$415.66 (31.3 per cent of the \$1,329.91 spent for current consumption) on food and liquor. This last estimate, if it can be regarded as typical of expenditures in that income scale, illustrates the "law" that the proportion spent on food decreases as the income increases. A \$1,500 income was distinctly a high income in 1860, and even the first two budgets would have been out of range of the greater part of the population. I have the impression that the ordinary city family would have spent close to 50 per cent of its income for food and that the same could be said of farm families, if food consumed on the farm be included in income.<sup>3</sup>

Even such statistical evidence cannot indicate the real importance of food. Expenditures for food contain much less of the "conventional" element than do expenditures for even clothing and shelter. That, as family income increases, smaller proportions are spent for food does not mean that food is less important to the rich than to the poor. What it means is that one can eat only so much food; and, while those who can afford it can eat more expensive foods (and waste more), their desires for greater variety and finer quality in foods are less expansive than their other desires. This suggests another reason for giving special attention to food production and consumption: until the economy produces an ample amount of food, the main effort must be to produce it; beyond that point the increasing proportion of productive resources which can be directed to the production of other goods causes their production (and consumption) to rise faster than income. Former "luxuries" quickly become "necessities."

<sup>3</sup> Professor Hazel Kyrk suggests, by way of confirmation, that farm families produced more food at home than nonfarm families and that the larger the proportion of food home-produced, the larger proportion it is of all consumption. It is also to be remembered that in 1860 there was a much larger proportion of farm families in the whole population than at present, which—if it is true that food makes up a larger proportion of consumption of farm than of city families—would also tend to make the percentage of national income allocated to food relatively large.

## THE PRODUCTION OF MEAT AND FISH

*Variety available.*—Every kind of meat now customarily obtainable was obtainable in the fifties—obtainable, that is, in some part of the country and at the proper season. Pork was the staple meat product for the country as a whole, but there were lamb and mutton, veal and beef. There was poultry to be had: chickens, ducks, geese, turkeys, guinea fowl. Besides these more commonplace meats, to which the destruction of wild life has very largely limited our own diets, there was then an abundance of game. In one part of the country or another there were to be found squirrel, rabbit, possum, coon, deer, antelope, and bear; prairie fowl, doves, quails, and plover; woodcock, snipe, grouse, pheasants, and wild turkeys; there were wild ducks and geese and even cranes and storks. Fish there were of all kinds, the product of commercial fisheries or of one's own catching—ocean fish, lake fish, and river fish, as well as shellfish of all varieties.

Meat-packing was confined largely to the local curing and packing of hog products. Most slaughtering was done by farmers in winter, who, after satisfying their own demands, sold the remainder of the carcass to a neighboring storekeeper or small packer, who cured it for the market.<sup>4</sup> There were numerous small slaughterhouses in eastern cities;<sup>5</sup> in the South there were not so many, as the plantations did their own slaughtering and curing.<sup>6</sup> In 1860, as now, meat-packing was essentially a western industry; but in that year the pork-packers of Cincinnati packed only 434,499 hogs, and Chicago had yet to pack

<sup>4</sup> U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Twelfth Census of the United States, 1900: Manufactures*, IX, Part III (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1902), 413.

<sup>5</sup> More than 350 packing-houses, with a product valued at \$32,000,000, were listed by the Census (U.S. Census Office, *Eighth Census of the United States: Manufactures* [Washington: Government Printing Office, 1865]). Something about Philadelphia meat-packers may be found in Edwin T. Freedley, *Philadelphia and Its Manufactures* (Philadelphia: Edward Young, 1858), p. 268.

<sup>6</sup> Cf. Emily P. Burke, *Reminiscences of Georgia* ([Oberlin, Ohio]: James M. Fitch, 1850), pp. 26–27; Susan Dabney Smedes, *A Southern Planter* (London: John Murray, 1889), p. 47; Ralph B. Flanders, *Plantation Slavery in Georgia* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1933), p. 159; Ulrich Bonnell Phillips, *American Negro Slavery* (New York: D. Appleton-Century Co., 1936), pp. 312–13; and other accounts of plantation life.

stretched on endlessly to the north, east, and south. To the west rose the mountains we had seen when looking northward from the ferry. Now they loomed dark against the setting sun. Only the deep shadows cast by the last rays of sunlight gave any character to the landscape. Otherwise it had a uniformly drab aspect that seemed repellent to us.

We sighted several large herds of black and white sheep and goats grazing on distant slopes, a sign that the country was fairly well settled; but one of the fellows spoke the thoughts of all of us when he exclaimed,

"Why should people want to live in this dreary place at all!"

As we returned to camp we were followed by a small herd of mangy, summer-thin camels, who appeared as if from nowhere. They seemed equally obsessed by curiosity about us, and a desire to drink from the well-trough. The camels were followed in turn by a herd of sheep driven by a scared-looking Mongol herdboys in a heavy sheepskin coat with the wool inside. When we stopped there, we had not seen any sign of life for miles. Now, with camels, sheep, and finally a herd of goats from the other direction, the place was crowded.

In time the animals drifted off and, as it was fast getting dark, we began to think about turning in. Now we could see the reason for the boy's sheepskin coat. As soon as the sun went down an icy breeze sprang up from the north. It pierced right through our light summer khakis. When we left subtropical Chungking in sweltering heat, we had not expected to find such extremes in climate, and had not brought enough bedding for sleeping out in such a place. We finally solved the problem by turning in fully dressed and pulling the blankets over our heads, thus shutting out the cold, and the beauty of the stars.

Next morning we were wakened at dawn by the loud braying of an indignant she-camel being led to the well by a Chinese homesteader who must have lived nearby. Her protests seemed uncalled for, as she was only carrying two empty wooden water-buckets hung from the usual camel's pack-saddle. The latter was made of two long, burr-filled bags of coarsely woven goat hair, pressed firmly against either side of the sagging humps by a pair of stout poles, the ends of which were lashed together by hair ropes where they projected beyond the humps, fore and aft. The driver was leading her by a



of the oyster fishing was done along the Atlantic Coast from Virginia to New York.<sup>12</sup>

*The transportation of meat.*—The problem in 1860 was not one of production, but one of transportation and refrigeration. Before the coming of the railroad, pork-packing had been less important than beef-packing, because it was easier to drive cattle long distances on the hoof. The railroads brought more and more swine to the packing-house centers;<sup>13</sup> but I have the impression that the greater number of the livestock was still driven, not carried, to the packing-house or slaughterhouse. The great western cattle drives of romantic fame were still in the future; but already the leading cattle-raising states were Texas, Missouri, and Iowa rather than those of the East; the yearlings were sent to Illinois, Ohio, and Indiana for fattening before being moved on to the stockyards. In these states the need for driving cattle and hogs to market played a large part in determining land values around the packing towns.

In the East, where distances were short, the cities could draw upon the surrounding territory for live and dressed meats;<sup>14</sup> and the westward extension of the railroads early in the fifties meant that the East could be supplied with cured meats—though not

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ing Office, 1866), p. 527. The total product of the fisheries for the census year was \$13,664,805, of which more than half (\$7,749,305) was whale, and nearly a third (\$4,183,503) cod, mackerel, herring, and similar fish. Whitefish caught in northern lakes made up \$464,479; oysters were valued at \$756,350; salmon (principally from Pacific Coast rivers), \$51,500. The *Census* pointed out that a large number of the population divided their time between fishing, farming, and other occupations, and so were unreported. More detailed information on the fisheries is to be found in *ibid.*, pp. 529-42.

<sup>12</sup> One estimate put the annual Chesapeake oyster trade at 20,000,000 bushels, mostly consumed by coast cities (*Hunt's Merchants' Magazine*, XXXIX [1858], 226). For other estimates and additional information about the oyster trade see *Eighth Census: Mortality and Miscellaneous*, pp. 540-41; *DeBow's Review*, XXIV (1858), 259, and XXX (1861), 112-14. Baltimore annually packed about \$3,000,000 worth of oysters (at about 35 cents a bushel), half raw in ice, half in tins; about half the pack was shipped to western cities, even as far as California.

<sup>13</sup> How great this effect of the railroad was and how quickly it occurred are illustrated by the fact that by 1854-55 Chicago's hog pack was already three times as great as that of cattle (Bessie L. Pierce, *A History of Chicago* [New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1940], II, 97).

<sup>14</sup> Note the large shipments of meat and livestock into New York City over the Erie Railroad as early as 1846 (*Niles Register*, LXXI [February 27, 1847], 403).

that, had he lived, he might have become 'the dominating figure of his generation and a wholesome and inspiring influence on younger men'. Kathleen Tillotson's Warton Lecture on English Poetry, *Matthew Arnold and Carlyle*, is an excellent study of the relationships that existed between the two writers.

*Essays by Divers Hands*,<sup>40</sup> edited this year by Angela Thirkell, contains nine papers, most of them concerned with poets and poetry. In an interesting lecture on Keats, Lord Norwich counters the legend that the poet's death was hastened by adverse criticism of *Endymion* or by a hopeless passion for Fanny Brawne. Keats's temperament was much more robust than his physique, and the real damage was done by his walking-tour in Scotland in the summer of 1818, which aggravated his consumption. In *A Modern Approach to the Gospels* E. V. Rieu develops his belief that the four accounts we have of Christ's ministry were 'truly founded on the reports of the original eye-witnesses'. But the Evangelists interpolated ideas and events 'which either arose out of their own religious imagination or were imposed upon them by the communal mentality of the Christian societies for which they severally wrote'. Speaking on Tennyson and his times, Viscount Esher shows how Tennyson 'embodied in beautiful language the illusions of the Victorian age'; he himself, however, 'had a character unaffected by, and conspicuously remote from, the benign and uplifted atmosphere of his own poetry'; he was 'a restless and unhappy man, full of unaccountable moods'. The Hon. C. M. Woodhouse attempts an interpretation of Shelley's famous dictum, 'Poets

are the unacknowledged legislators of the world.' He decides that 'it is legislation in the sense that changes the outlook and character of mankind that Shelley meant; and he meant mankind as a whole'. C. Day Lewis's subject is the poetry of Edward Thomas, in which he finds 'both the awkwardness and the irresistibility of absolute sincerity'. In *The Two Worlds of Coleridge* Louis Bonnerot studies 'the curious relationship between the double aspiration of Coleridge's mind towards "the little" and "the great", as exemplified in the Quantock Poems'. This paper contains some perceptive analysis of the 'conversation poems'. Guy Boas speaks about John Evelyn in his character of 'virtuoso', with illustrations from his 'numerous and variegated writings'. Cyril Falls gives an interesting account of the relations that existed between Penelope Rich and the poets of her day. Finally, in *Countries of the Imagination* James Laver discusses literature which takes the reader, and writer, into countries of escape or vision: from the Revelation of St. John to the work of the Bolshevik poet who saw his dream-world in Chicago, from medieval romances to the novels of Ethel M. Dell.

The second volume of *Sprache und Literatur Englands und Amerikas*<sup>41</sup> contains three philological articles: *Neue Ausdrucksmittel im Englischen als Ersatz der Flexion*, by Bogislav von Lindheim; *Verwechselbare Leit- und Schlüsselwörter im Englischen und Deutschen*, by Wolfgang Schmidt-Hidding; and *Der englische Wortschatz als Forschungsgegenstand*, by Ernst Leisi. Eustace M. W. Tillyard contributes an essay on *Reality and*

<sup>40</sup> *Essays by Divers Hands: Being the Transactions of the Royal Society of Literature*. N.S., Vol. XXVIII. Ed. by Angela Thirkell. O.U.P. pp. xiii+157. 15s.

<sup>41</sup> *Sprache und Literatur Englands und Amerikas: Lehrgangsvorträge der Akademie Comburg*, ed. by Carl August Weber, with Rudolf Haas and Hermann Metzger. Vol. II. Tübingen: Niemeyer. pp. 164. DM. 10.

cutting of ice was a considerable business during the coldest months,<sup>19</sup> and apparently it was kept in icehouses in sufficient quantity to be fairly cheap even in summer. The shipment of ice from the North to the South had begun at the turn of the century, and ice had become a normal article of trade, coming both from the Northeast and the Northwest.

*The preservation of meat.*—The almost complete absence of household refrigeration<sup>20</sup> meant that the use of fresh meat could not be very economical, and the lack of refrigerated facilities for transportation and storage would have prevented any great use of fresh meat anyway. During the northern winters there was some freezing of beef for home consumption. On the whole, however, if meat was not to be eaten soon after being slaughtered, it had to be cured or pickled. Hams and bacon were usually smoked and salted, the rest of the hog pickled in strong brine.<sup>21</sup> Beef, when preserved, was corned, salted (dried), or pickled; but salt beef was notoriously dry and tough. To "jerk" beef was to cut it into strips, dip them in brine, and dry them; frequently jerked beef was powdered and mixed with other foods or food products. Occasionally a strong meat broth was mixed with flour to form "meat biscuits."<sup>22</sup> The use of such

<sup>19</sup> The development of special equipment for cutting ice, about 1827, made the product much cheaper (Cummings, pp. 37-38). Readers of Thoreau will recall his description, in *Walden*, of the cutting of ice in Walden Pond and the reflections to which it led him. (In the Concord edition [Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1893], of which *Walden* is Vol. II, this passage is to be found on pp. 324 ff.)

It was estimated that in 1854 New York State harvested about 340,000 tons of ice and that Boston in the same year shipped 156,540 tons (*DeBow's Review*, XIX [1855], 70 ff.; *Hunt's Merchants' Magazine*, XXXIII [1855], 169-79; see also *Eighth Census: Manufactures*, p. 737; New York, Secretary of State, *Census of the State of New York for 1855* [Albany: Charles Van Benthuysen & Sons, 1857], p. 442; *Census of the State of New York for 1865* [Albany, 1867], p. 497).

<sup>20</sup> See below, pp. 46-48.

<sup>21</sup> The *Ladies' Repository* (XX [January 1860], 54), recommended another means of preserving ham for summer use—packing it in slices in stone jars and covering it with lard just warm enough to run. Whether such methods were much used I have no way of knowing.

<sup>22</sup> One of Borden's earliest patents was for a meat biscuit intended for use by gold-rushers (James Leander Bishop, *A History of American Manufactures from 1608 to 1860* [Philadelphia: E. Young & Co., 1868], II, 544-45). It was of Borden's biscuit that Olmsted wrote: "After preparing a substantial dish of it, according to the directions, we all tried it once, then turned unanimously to the watery potatoes" (p. 81).

unpalatable foods as pemmican, jerked beef, and meat biscuit was largely confined to the Frontier, and especially to travelers across the plains. Fish might be preserved in a number of ways—salted and dried, smoked, potted, baked, pickled, marinated, preserved in oil, or pounded into a dry mass.

The early history of commercial canning is now fairly well documented.<sup>23</sup> The real development of the industry came after 1850, based upon the canning of Baltimore oysters, Maine lobsters, and (possibly) sardines. Oyster-canning had been an established business as early as 1850, and by 1860 had benefited from such technical improvements as that of opening the oysters by steam. The development of the canning industry around Chesapeake Bay is particularly interesting. Here within a small area were oysters, crabs, and fish; peaches, apples, plums, berries, and other fruits. The climate was ideal for tomatoes, and the location was close to a labor supply and to transportation facilities. Here and elsewhere along the coast, canneries began operating on a year-round basis, alternating the canning of oysters, lobsters, crabs, and fish with that of fruits and vegetables. The canning process then used involved cooking after canning, with the result that the product lost bulk and became unappetizing in appearance; not until the seventies was this corrected. The industry was using stamped tin cans with extension edges, and tops and bottoms put on by a "pendulum press"; improvements in canning were made only slowly, and the processes—trade secrets—were purely empirical. Not until the Civil War made it necessary to provide troops with large quantities of provisions which would keep did the output become large enough to have much effect on food consumption.

*Meat markets.*—Boston's Faneuil Market was 585 feet long

<sup>23</sup> Among the most useful sources are the following: James H. Collins, *The Story of Canned Foods* (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., 1924); Earl Chapin May, *The Canning Clan* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1937); U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Twelfth Census of the United States, 1900: Manufactures*, Vol. IX, Part III: "Special Reports on Selected Industries" (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1902); U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Census of Manufactures, 1905: Canning and Preserving, Rice Cleaning and Polishing, and the Manufacture of Beet-Sugar* (Bull. 61) (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1906); Edward S. Judge, "American Canning Interests," *One Hundred Years of American Commerce*, I, 396-400.

and 50 feet wide, on a base of blue Quincy marble; it was divided into numerous stalls for the sale of all sorts of meat, fish, poultry, and vegetables.<sup>24</sup> Here Charles Edward Bolton, new to the big city, was greatly impressed by the quantity of food sold, and the Englishman Weld by the use of ice to keep the foods fresh.<sup>25</sup> Of another Boston market James M. Phillippo wrote:

Quincy Market is a splendid edifice of granite, and is the most clean, commodious, and best supplied of any market in the United States. The abundant supply of wild fowl, together with poultry of all kinds, successively exhibited here, is astonishing to a foreigner.<sup>26</sup>

Besides these there were the Blackstone, Boylston, Franklin, Gerrish, St. Charles, South, Washington, and Williams markets.<sup>27</sup>

But if we may judge conditions in other cities by what we know to be true in New York, visitors were likely to be so impressed by the size of the markets and the variety they offered as to be oblivious to less attractive features. Alfred Pairpont, for instance, wrote:

The Washington and Fulton Markets of New York are of great extent, and supplied with an almost endless variety of the choicest articles of food—meat, poultry, fish, vegetables, and fruits from all parts, which are conveyed hither by steamboat and sailing craft—also by the numerous railways from the interior.<sup>28</sup>

The city inspector, in his report for 1860, refers to these same markets in quite different terms:

They are a singular agglomeration of rotten wood, wornout masonry, and collected filth, without system in their construction, or any visible appearance which would enable the stranger to discover why they are permitted to exist. Should this description be regarded as too extravagant, all doubt upon the

<sup>24</sup> R. L. Midgley, *Sights in Boston and Suburbs* (Boston: John P. Jewett & Co., 1856), pp. 11-13.

<sup>25</sup> Charles K. Bolton (ed.), "A Journey to Maine in 1859: A Diary of Charles Edward Bolton," *New England Quarterly*, IX (1936), 122; Charles Rich Weld, *A Vacation Tour in the United States and Canada* (London: Longman, Brown, Green, and Longman, 1855), p. 38.

<sup>26</sup> *The United States and Cuba* (London: Pewtress & Co., 1857), p. 257.

<sup>27</sup> *The Boston Almanac, 1860* (No. 25) (Boston: John P. Jewett & Co., 1860), p. 181.

<sup>28</sup> *Uncle Sam and His Country* (London: Simpkins, Marshall & Co., 1857), pp. 29-30.

on her passages, and indicates their sources. The extracts are also available from the British Council in recordings made at Cambridge under the direction of George Rylands.

Gwyn Williams, whose *Introduction to Welsh Poetry* was noticed in YW xxxiv.9, has now produced, in *The Burning Tree*,<sup>55</sup> an excellent anthology of Welsh poetry, ranging from the work of Aneirin and Taliesin to that of poets who wrote at the turn of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. The title *The Burning Tree*, derived from a passage in the *Mabinogion*, was chosen 'to suggest an outstanding mood of the Welsh poet, the awareness at the same time of contrary seasons and passions, a mood in which the poet brings into one phrase the force of love and war, of summer and winter, of holy sacrament and adulterous love'. Williams has followed the admirable practice of printing the original texts parallel with the translations; and he has provided an informative foreword on the poets and the spirit and technique of early Welsh poetry.

In *Early Irish Lyrics*<sup>56</sup> Gerard Murphy has also given parallel texts. Rather more than half of the sixty poems in this collection are monastic in origin, and they include some fine meditative verse, and poems also on other preoccupations of the cloister, especially study. The secular poems represent a great variety of topics: lament for a dead warrior and lament on the loss of a pet goose, love-affairs, and the trees of Ireland; and there are several poems from the Finn-Cycle. This anthology should be of special

value to those who are interested in the Celtic revival of recent times.

Two new volumes of short stories have been added to the World's Classics. The second series of *Modern English Short Stories*,<sup>57</sup> edited by Derek Hudson, is a sequel to the volume collected by Phyllis M. Jones before the war, and contains a score of stories written since 1930. In *Welsh Short Stories*<sup>58</sup> Gwyn Jones presents twenty-six stories by eighteen Welsh writers of recent years, with a critical introductory essay. These two selections between them provide some stimulating reading, and give a very good picture of what has been done in the short story during the last two or three decades.

### 7. Translations

Several interesting translations have appeared in the course of the year, about half of them in the admirable series of Penguin Classics. In this series Philip Vellacott follows up his two volumes of Euripides with the new version of the *Oresteia*<sup>59</sup> of Aeschylus which he was commissioned by the B.B.C. to write. For the episodic sections of the plays Vellacott uses a free hexameter, and for the choruses a variety of lyrical forms which on the whole reproduce pretty closely the 'feel' of the originals. These versions read easily, and, as the broadcasts showed, they also speak well. In a short introduction Vellacott fills in the legendary and dramatic background of the trilogy and provides some critical comments.

<sup>57</sup> *Modern English Short Stories: Second Series*, selected with an Introduction by Derek Hudson. (The World's Classics.) O.U.P. pp. xiv+362. 7s.

<sup>58</sup> *Welsh Short Stories*, selected and with an Introduction by Gwyn Jones. (The World's Classics.) O.U.P. pp. xv+330. 7s.

<sup>59</sup> *Aeschylus. The Oresteian Trilogy: 'Agamemnon'. 'The Choephoroi'. 'The Eumenides'*, translated by Philip Vellacott. Penguin Books. pp. 201. 2s. 6d.

<sup>55</sup> *The Burning Tree: Poems from the First Thousand Years of Welsh Verse*, selected and translated by Gwyn Williams. Faber. pp. 234. 25s.

<sup>56</sup> *Early Irish Lyrics: Eighth to Twelfth Century*, ed. with Translation, Notes, and Glossary by Gerard Murphy. O.U.P. pp. xxii+315. 42s.

Street. Tallack mentioned Philadelphia's "large and well-supplied market-houses."<sup>33</sup> Pittsburgh, in 1852 and 1853, built the Diamond, a new city hall and market place.<sup>34</sup> In Cincinnati the markets extended for a mile along the streets, where were to be found beef and pork, eggs, poultry, and other sorts of meat; fish came there from Lake Erie by train, oysters from Baltimore, game from the prairies.<sup>35</sup> St. Louis had ten market-houses.<sup>36</sup> Markets in the South were likely to be rather different from those in the North. Savannah's market, for instance, was merely a roof supported by pillars, with a brick floor and a pump in the middle. Female slaves sold fresh vegetables the year around, and there were fish and shell fish, domestic and wild fowl, tropical and other fruits. People came from miles around to buy and sell.<sup>37</sup> New Orleans' "Old French Market" was famous.<sup>38</sup> In the West, the Washington and the Metropolitan were a "creditable" feature of San Francisco, roofed in and clean. The supply of vegetables was great throughout the year; fruit of all kinds was plentiful in summer but, except for apples and oranges, was scarce during the winter months. Game was abundant—venison, rabbits, wild geese, chicks, quail. Altogether, San Francisco had five public markets, of which two had over two dozen stalls each.<sup>39</sup>

#### EGGS AND DAIRY PRODUCTS

*Milk.*—The growing importance of dairying in New England had long been apparent; it was important also in New York State and was a specialty of the Western Reserve district of

<sup>33</sup> J. Thomas Scharf and Thompson Wescott, *History of Philadelphia, 1609-1884* (Philadelphia: L. H. Everts & Co., 1884), I, 729; William Tallack, *Friendly Sketches in America* (London: A. W. Bennett, 1861), p. 85.

<sup>34</sup> Leland D. Baldwin, *Pittsburgh: The Story of a City* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 1937), p. 204; George Thornton Fleming, *History of Pittsburgh and Environs* (New York: American Historical Society, Inc., 1922), II, 93.

<sup>35</sup> Thomas Low Nichols, *Forty Years of American Life* (London: John Maxwell & Co., 1864), I, 159. In 1851 there were six market-houses (Cist, pp. 274 ff.).

<sup>36</sup> *DeBow's Review*, XVI (1854), 400.

<sup>37</sup> Burke, pp. 19-21.

<sup>38</sup> See below, pp. 34-35.

<sup>39</sup> Mrs. Redding Sutherland, *Five Years within the Golden Gate* (London: Chapman & Hall, 1868), p. 45; Hubert Howe Bancroft, *History of California* (San Francisco: History Co., 1888), VI, 783.

Ohio. During the fifties butter and fluid milk were displacing cheese as a dairy product. But prior to 1860, while much butter and a good deal of cheese were being manufactured, dairying received special attention in but few parts of the country, and much of the product was inferior in quality.

In the cities a large proportion of the milk came from "swill-milk" establishments—enterprises located within the cities, usually in connection with distilleries, which fed their closely confined cows on slops and distillery refuse. In 1852 the swill-milk establishments of New York City had 13,000 cows. Not only was the milk itself of doubtful quality, but it was likely to be adulterated. It was estimated that New York City drank about 330,000 quarts of milk a day in 1852. Of this, 100,000 quarts consisted of country milk brought in and 30,000 quarts of adulterants added to it; 160,000 quarts were swill milk produced in the city, and 40,000 quarts were additions to the swill milk.<sup>40</sup> The milk supply of Chicago<sup>41</sup> and other cities was about as bad. There was practically no regulation. Massachusetts in 1856 took the lead by prohibiting adulteration of milk and in 1859 the feeding of distillery waste;<sup>42</sup> and New York State in 1861 made swill milk illegal.

Milk is even more subject to rapid bacterial action than is meat and consequently requires to a still greater degree refrigeration and rapid transportation. In the years preceding the Civil War the greater advances had been in transportation. The railroads made it possible for the big cities to draw on larger areas for their supplies of milk. By the fifties the Harlem Railroad alone was bringing in over 70,000 quarts a day, some of it from "nearly a hundred miles."<sup>43</sup> Chicago had obtained its milk "on

<sup>40</sup> "The Milk Trade of New York," *Hunt's Merchants' Magazine*, XXVIII (1853), 682-89, based on John Mullaly, *The Milk Trade in New York and Vicinity* (New York: Fowler & Wells).

<sup>41</sup> Pierce, II, 461-62; see also Arthur Charles Cole, *The Irrepressible Conflict, 1850-1865*, in Arthur M. Schlesinger and Dixon Ryan Fox (eds.), *A History of American Life*, VII (New York: Macmillan Co., 1934), 181.

<sup>42</sup> Edmund F. Vial, "Milk Supply," *Encyclopedia of the Social Sciences*, X, 475-80.

<sup>43</sup> *Appleton's Illustrated Railway and Steam Navigation Guide*, January, 1860 (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1860), p. 84.



the hoof" in the early days, but by 1853 it was being shipped in over the Galena Railroad, soon to be called the "Milky Way." During the last six months of 1854, 27,338 gallons of milk were brought to Chicago over that line.<sup>44</sup> There was practically no refrigeration of milk. *Hunt's Merchants' Magazine*, commenting on a table which showed that in 1860 only two-fifths of the milk produced was consumed as fluid milk, suggested that this proportion would have been much higher if there had been any way of keeping milk fresh until it got to market.<sup>45</sup> Nor was there much preservation of milk by condensing it. Borden's processes had been patented in the fifties, and by 1860 he was selling unsweetened condensed milk from 40-quart cans on pushcarts and sweetened condensed milk in tins. But the whole output was too small to be of commercial importance.<sup>46</sup>

*Other dairy products.*—The production of butter in the United States as a whole amounted to 14.62 pounds per capita (21.5 pounds in the Middle states, somewhat more than 16 pounds in the New England and southern states, 6–8 pounds per capita in the regions farther west); and, allowing for exports, the average per capita consumption would have been 14.35 pounds, as compared with 17.28 pounds during the five-year period, 1926–30.<sup>47</sup> In the absence of domestic refrigeration it was difficult to keep butter fresh. It was frequently kept in the cellar, sometimes in the well shaft.

<sup>44</sup> Pierce, II, 461.

<sup>45</sup> See Appen. C, Table 23.

<sup>46</sup> Collins, pp. 93–96. The only milk condensary (Borden's) reporting to the Eighth Census (*Manufactures*, p. 738) had an output for the year valued at \$48,000.

<sup>47</sup> *Report of the Secretary of the Treasury: Transmitting a Report from the Register of the Treasury, of the Commerce and Navigation of the United States, for the Year Ending June 30, 1860* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1861), pp. 13, 195; U.S. Census Office, *Eighth Census of the United States, 1860: Agriculture* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1864), pp. lxxii, lxxxv; U.S. Bureau of Foreign and Domestic Commerce, *U.S. Statistical Abstract*, LVII (1935), Tables 508–9, 588–89, 592 (pp. 455, 502, 603, 605).

Total production reported to the Eighth Census was 459,681,372 pounds, net exports were 7,648,957 pounds. The figure for the recent period was obtained by adding to average factory production and imports the estimated farm production (1929), subtracting the exports, and dividing the net total by the average population.

The production of cheese in the census year 1860 was 3.29 pounds per capita (6.89 in New England, 6.15 in the Middle states, less than 3.00 in other regions), and consumption only 2.84 pounds per capita, as compared with 5.45 pounds in 1929.<sup>48</sup>

In the early part of the century, making ice cream had been a laborious task which involved beating the cream with a spoon and then agitating the container by hand in an ice-and-salt mixture, but by the middle of the century the familiar form of mixer equipped with crank and paddles had appeared.<sup>49</sup> It was reported in 1860 that more than 20,000 freezers of one type had been sold in three years.<sup>50</sup>

*Eggs.*—I have found no estimates of the production or consumption of eggs before the Civil War. That there was some shipment of them to consuming centers is indicated by the fact that Norfolk, in 1852, shipped about 1,800 barrels of 100 dozen eggs each, packed in oats.<sup>51</sup> I think it is probable that most farmers kept a few chickens and so had enough eggs for their own families; the difficulties of shipping and storing them may have kept city consumption at a minimum, especially in the off-season. There were various ways of keeping eggs, most of which involved coating them with some impervious substance to close the pores and packing them in bran, salt, ashes, powdered charcoal, cornmeal, or limewater.

#### CEREAL FOODSTUFFS

*Crop production.*—The few years preceding the Civil War had been years of rapidly increasing productivity in agriculture. Not only was there new farm machinery,<sup>52</sup> but there was greater

<sup>48</sup> *Eighth Census: Agriculture*, pp. lxxx-lxxxv; *Commerce and Navigation Report, 1860*, pp. 15, 197; *Statistical Abstract*, Tables 509, 533, 603 (pp. 502, 557, 612). Production for 1860 was 103,663,927 pounds; net exports, 14,191,742 pounds.

<sup>49</sup> Cummings, p. 40.

<sup>50</sup> "Modern Ice Cream, and the Philosophy of Its Manufacture," *Godey's Lady's Book*, LX (May, 1860), 460-61; a picture and description of the freezer are also given.

<sup>51</sup> *Hunt's Merchants' Magazine*, XXIX (1853), 266.

<sup>52</sup> "By the improved plow, labor equivalent to that of one horse in three is saved. By means of drills two bushels of seed will go as far as three bushels scattered broadcast, while the yield is increased six to eight bushels per acre; the plants come up in

use of natural and artificial fertilizers, crop rotation was being practiced, and there was some selection of seed to overcome plant pests and diseases. The widespread interest in agricultural improvement is shown in the circulation of farm papers and in the membership in agricultural societies. Meanwhile, the expansion of transportation facilities was making it possible to exploit western lands where the new equipment and methods were particularly suitable. In the East, in many sections, cereal crops were declining in importance, in the West rapidly increasing. The five states of Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Wisconsin, and Iowa, which in 1839 had supplied one-fourth of all the wheat and corn produced, by 1859 were supplying one-half. The use of the reaping machine and other farm machinery of recent origin was confined almost entirely to the large farms of the West; elsewhere the old hand implements and methods were still used.

Of the grain crops, corn continued its undisputed lead. The Eighth Census showed a production of 839,792,740 bushels, of which 3,265,515 bushels were exported, as well as some in the form of corn meal.<sup>53</sup> The amount exported was highly variable but, during the decade of the fifties, ran well over the 1860 figure except in 1859. Production of wheat was 173,124,904 bushels (5.50 bushels per capita). With deductions for exports (approximately 15,897,082 bushels of wheat and wheat flour), there was an apparent per capita consumption of about 4.99 bushels—little different from the average consumption of about 4.80 bushels for the years 1926–30, although the differences in the form in which it was consumed may have been considerable.<sup>54</sup>

Production of other cereal crops was as follows: rye, 21,101,380 bushels (0.66 bushels per capita); oats, 172,643,185 bushels

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rows and may be tended by horse-hoes. . . . The reaping machine is a saving of more than one-third the labor when it cuts and rakes. . . . The threshing machine is a saving of two-thirds on the old hand flail mode. . . . The saving in the labor of handling hay in the field and barn by means of horserakes and horsehayforks is equal to one half" (*Eighth Census: Agriculture*, quoted by Cummings).

<sup>53</sup> *Eighth Census: Agriculture*, p. xlvi, *Commerce and Navigation Report*, 1860, p. 49. Per capita production of corn was about 26.12 bushels; but this figure has little significance, owing to the effect of holdovers and because so much corn is fed.

<sup>54</sup> *Eighth Census: Agriculture*, p. xxix; *Statistical Abstract*, Table 644 (p. 648).

advanced readers will enjoy the wit and the fresh presentation of old themes, and they will profit from Whatmough's enthusiasm for the application of mathematics to linguistic study. The most interesting feature is the exposition of his theory of 'selective variation', on which the index might have added the page references 84, 115, 170. Among the regrettable features is the continual absence of supporting references to important statements and claims, the offering of statements for which no proof has ever to the present writer's knowledge been worked out, the appearance of highly technical and incommunicable telecommunication jargon beside 'popular' statements like "'naughty" itself is literally "good-for-nothing"', and chatty absurdities. Even in some of the best sections, Whatmough's linguistic insight seems rather dubious.

Although subtitled *A New Approach to Greek and Latin Literature*, Whatmough's other book this year<sup>4</sup> has also a good deal to say about 'selective variation' and his mathematical theories. It is full of *obiter dicta* on almost every aspect of linguistic usage, scholarship, and autobiography. Literary critics come in for a severe drubbing, but though it is fairly clear that Whatmough sees their 'subjectivity' as a crime, he does not make it equally clear how they might do better. The chapter called 'Religio Grammatici' is subtitled 'Understanding, Not Criticism', and if we were to agree that the latter does not normally subsume the former, we might be at the kernel of his objection, destructive and constructive. The book is entertaining and learned, and while it leaves one confused it undoubtedly fires the imagination and enthusiasm continually.

<sup>4</sup> *Poetic, Scientific and Other Forms of Discourse*. (Sather Classical Lectures 29.) California U.P. \$5.

Now that Pedersen (in Danish and in Spargo's translation) has become a rare book, one is all the readier to welcome a full-scale history of linguistic science, of which we stand in great need. The achievement of Arens's *Sprachwissenschaft*<sup>5</sup> is most impressive and the book will be of great value, particularly with regard to the nineteenth century, for the bulk of this work deals—like Pedersen's—with the rise of scientific comparative studies. But if Pedersen was at fault in dealing inadequately with the contribution to linguistics of English-speaking scholars, Arens is much more so. It is astonishing to find the index of a work like this including Stalin but not Ellis, Murray, Sweet, Wright, Craigie, or Daniel Jones. Our earlier scholars come off better (both Bacons, Hickee, Horne Tooke, James Harris, Locke, Sir William Jones, *inter alia*): indeed, one of the pleasing features of the work is the account of linguistic analysis in the earlier periods—in antiquity, the Middle Ages, and the centuries leading up to the discovery of Sanskrit by Western scholars. But it is for the magnificent account of the nineteenth century that the book will be chiefly valued. The modern period is dealt with inadequately, but no matter: this is the period of fully developed self-consciousness in linguists and we are well equipped with their apologiae.

For the reappearance of another German book on language we are indebted to A. Scherer, who has done an excellent job in bringing up to date Güntert's useful and widely read work.<sup>6</sup> A further book, *All about Lan-*

<sup>5</sup> *Sprachwissenschaft: Der Gang Ihrer Entwicklung von der Antike bis zur Gegenwart*, by H. Arens. Karl Alber. pp. x+568. DM. 34.

<sup>6</sup> *Grundfragen der Sprachwissenschaft*, by H. Güntert. Second edition. Rev. by A. Scherer. Heidelberg: Quelle and Meyer. pp. 155. DM. 5.80.

dough through all the baking processes, and using up to 800 barrels of flour a day.<sup>58</sup> But these bakeries failed to revolutionize bread-baking; and, while there must have been a great deal of baking by the old-fashioned bakeries, business historians have ignored them in their interest in the large-scale baking of biscuits, crackers, and shipbread. By the middle of the fifties the original products of "pilot bread" and hard, "cold-water" crackers had been supplemented by soft or butter crackers, square soda crackers, and round sugar biscuits, all made of fermented dough and containing shortening.<sup>59</sup> Production of macaroni and similar products was unimportant.

#### VEGETABLE- AND FRUIT-GROWING

*Gardens and orchards.*—I can think of no other consumption goods in which actuality fell so far short of potentiality as it did in vegetables and fruits. Here I intend only to suggest what the possibilities were; in chapter iii I shall say more about actual consumption.

That there was a great variety of garden vegetables available to those who were wealthy enough to buy them or who were willing to take the trouble to grow them is shown by the garden manuals of the fifties.<sup>60</sup> These give directions for the home cultivation of such vegetables as artichokes, asparagus, beans of various kinds, beets, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, cabbages, carrots, cauliflower, celery, chive, citrons, collards, cress, cucumbers, eggplants, endive, kale, lettuce, leeks, okra, onions, oyster plants (salsify), parsnips, peas, potatoes, pumpkins, radishes, rhubarb, rutabagas, spinach, squash, sweet corn, sweet potatoes, Swiss chard, tomatoes, turnips, and water cress; and others to be used for seasoning and sauces. (This does not include field

<sup>58</sup> For descriptions of these bakeries see *Harper's Weekly*, I (January 3, 1857), 2; *Scientific American*, XIII (1858), 301; Freedley, *Philadelphia* (1858 ed.), p. 267; Isaac D. Guyer, *History of Chicago: Its Commercial and Manufacturing Interests and Industry* . . . (Chicago: Church, Goodman, & Cushing, 1862), pp. 172-73.

<sup>59</sup> Frank A. Kennedy, "The Biscuit Industry," *One Hundred Years of American Commerce*, II, 447-48; see also Freedley, p. 267.

<sup>60</sup> E.g., Robert Buist, *The Family Kitchen Gardener* (New York: C. M. Saxton & Co., 1855).

corn, which as a vegetable could be prepared in a number of different ways.)

Not only were these vegetables known and, to some extent, actually grown; there were only a small proportion of the population living in such crowded conditions that they had no garden space. While there was little leisure, it is hard to believe that no member of the family had time enough to do a little gardening.

Much the same thing can be said of fruits. Up to the fifties there had been little care in the selection of varieties of fruit trees or in the maintaining of them. But by 1860 there were numerous state and national horticultural societies, with annual congresses; and there were several state and national horticultural journals. With the fifties there came a number of books on horticulture,<sup>61</sup> describing in detail many kinds of fruit and their cultivation: apples, apricots, cherries, nectarines, peaches, pears, plums, and quinces; grapes, currants, gooseberries, ground cherries, raspberries, strawberries, blackberries, mulberries, barberries, whortleberries (huckleberries), blueberries; pomegranates (for the southern and south Middle states); and lemons, limes, oranges, and citrons (cultivated in Florida and to some extent in California). In Florida wild sour-orange trees had been transplanted and grafted with sweet-orange buds.<sup>62</sup> Some enthusiasts were endeavoring, but without success, to spread the cultivation of such fruits as figs and olives. In the West wild fruits and berries, including mandrakes (May apples) and pawpaws besides the more familiar varieties, took the place of cultivated fruits;<sup>63</sup> but in such states as Michigan and Illinois large orchards were beginning to bear.

<sup>61</sup> E.g., P. Barry, *The Fruit Garden* (Auburn, N.Y.: Alden & Beardsley, 1855); S. W. Cole, *The American Fruit Book* (Boston: John P. Jewett & Co., 1854); A. J. Downing, *The Fruits and Fruit Trees of America* (rev. ed.; New York: John Wiley, 1861); F. R. Elliott, *Elliott's Fruit Book* (New York: C. M. Saxton, 1854); Thomas Gregg, *A Hand-Book of Fruit Culture* (New York: Fowler & Wells, 1857); and John J. Thomas, *The American Fruit Culturist* (Auburn, N.Y.: Derby, Miller & Co., 1849).

<sup>62</sup> James D. B. DeBow, *The Industrial Resources, etc., of the Southern and Western States* (New Orleans: Office of DeBow's Review, 1852-53), I, 350-51.

<sup>63</sup> There is some reason to believe that the consumption of wild fruits, especially berries, was fairly large even in the East—perhaps even in New England.

We can hardly say of these fruits, as we can of vegetables, that they should have been available to everyone. Some of them were not suited to domestic cultivation at all, and many of them were rather exacting as to soil and climatic conditions. Many of them do not begin to bear until years after planting. They were, as a rule, more perishable than vegetables, less easily kept or marketed. Nevertheless, there were a few easily cultivated annuals and various kinds of berries, which the working classes might easily have grown for themselves.

Among nuts, chestnuts, English and black walnuts, filberts, hickory nuts, and butternuts were domestically produced; but attempts to introduce the production of almonds had not been successful. What fruits and nuts could not be produced at home—dates and figs, for instance, and almonds and cocoanuts—could be imported. Even tropical fruits—bananas and pineapples—were to be had.<sup>64</sup>

Surrounding all the large cities were truck gardens supplying fruits and vegetables for the city trade. There were hundreds of acres devoted to the production of tomatoes for the New York market and other hundreds of acres in Cape Cod, producing cranberries.<sup>65</sup> Eastern Virginia and Maryland did what seemed an immense business in supplying truck produce for the northern market, though handicapped by the impossibility of refrigerating in transit.<sup>66</sup> During the decade there was a great develop-

<sup>64</sup> Imports of fruits and nuts for the fiscal year 1860, as given in the *Commerce and Navigation Report, 1860*, were as follows:

Currants.....	5,844,947 pounds	Lemons.....	\$423,220
Dates.....	3,093,753	Limes.....	6,352
Figs.....	7,410,288	Oranges.....	753,695
Plums.....	4,125,890	Other fruit.....	234,124
Prunes.....	4,960,478	Preserved fruit.....	169,827
Raisins.....	23,693,573	Cocoanuts.....	45,718
Almonds.....	2,873,014	Other nuts.....	236,568

<sup>65</sup> Andrew Jackson Downing, *Rural Essays* (New York: Leavitt & Allen, 1853) p. 71; *One Hundred Years' Progress*, p. 85; Alfred Henderson, "American Horticulture," *One Hundred Years of American Commerce*, I, 248-56.

<sup>66</sup> Avery O. Craven, *Soil Exhaustion as a Factor in the Agricultural History of Virginia and Maryland, 1606-1860* ("Studies in the Social Sciences of the University of Illinois," Vol. XIII, No. 1 [Urbana, Ill.: University of Illinois Press, 1926]); Andrew M. Soule, "Vegetables, Fruits and Nursery Products, and Truck Farming in the South,"

ment of fruit nurseries and orchards, and each year millions of new fruit trees were set out. Orchards were being started in the South (Georgia was then trying to grow oranges) and in California, as well as in the states of the old Northwest; and vineyards were planted along the Ohio, where the Catawba grape was especially popular.<sup>67</sup>

*Preservation and transportation of fruits and vegetables.*—For the most part, perishable fruits and vegetables were consumed only in season; at other times of the year dependence was on those which could be kept without much difficulty. Navy beans, which could be kept the year around, were in many regions a staple foodstuff and so, to a lesser extent, were onions. Potatoes, cabbages, and root crops—turnips, parsnips, beets, carrots—were easily kept in a “root cellar”<sup>68</sup> or buried. Geographical differences in consumption were due not so much to different growing conditions as to differences in the possibilities of storage: Irish potatoes, which ripened quickly and had to be dug in weather too hot for storage, were used in the North, while in the South sweet potatoes, maturing in the autumn, were the staple vegetable.

Despite the progress made in commercial canning, most of the preserving was done in the home by methods which had been in common use for many years. Some fruits and vegetables were dried, some packed in syrup or in hermetically sealed jars.<sup>69</sup>

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*South in the Building of the Nation*, V, 236-42; see also *DeBow's Review*, XXV (1858), 226; and *Hunt's Merchants' Magazine*, XXXIX (1858), 753. How this trucking area appeared to an observant northerner is recounted in Frederick Law Olmsted, *A Journey in the Seaboard Slave States* (New York: Dix & Edwards, 1856), pp. 6-7.

<sup>67</sup> *One Hundred Years' Progress*, p. 82; *Harper's Weekly*, I (January 31, 1857), 77; Owen C. Coy, *The Humboldt Bay Region, 1850-1875* (Los Angeles: California State Historical Association, 1929), pp. 113-14; William Chambers, *Things as They Are in America* (London: William and Robert Chambers, 1854), p. 159; Percy W. Bidwell and J. I. Falconer, *History of Agriculture in Northern United States, 1620-1860* (Washington: Carnegie Institution, 1925), pp. 380-81; see also production statistics in *Census of the State of New York for 1855*, pp. 320-26; and *Census . . . for 1865*, pp. 400-409.

<sup>68</sup> “Under the most splendid house in the city is still to be found the cellar where they store their roots as of old” (Thoreau, *Walden*, p. 49).

<sup>69</sup> Such canning supplies as glass bottles and earthenware jars and the new self-sealing cans (sealed by screwing the cover upon a rubber compress or by warming the cover and pressing it down upon a rim of cement) were commonly sold by country stores (Cummings, p. 85).



Apples were dried, but more commonly packed away in barrels in the cellar. Apricots and peaches were dried or hermetically sealed; I think they were occasionally packed away in ice, though this was certainly not common. Tomatoes were usually put up in jars,<sup>70</sup> but sometimes were baked and dried. Grapes were packed in sawdust or bran, and other small fruits were hermetically sealed or preserved in sugar. (Most of the recipes given in the women's magazines called either for a great deal of sugar or for wine or brandy.) Corn was occasionally parched or pickled, though usually stored in the crib without any processing. Cabbage could easily be preserved as sauerkraut.

The commercial canning of fruits and vegetables was developing in much the same fashion as that of meats, and packers were canning pickles, catsups, sauces, jellies, jams, and mustard, and a variety of fruit, tomatoes, and corn. Cannerys were still processing their foods by boiling, and the industry was still a small-scale business, centering in Maryland, but with some firms farther north.

One can find numerous instances of apparently speedy and efficient transportation of vegetables and fruits. In 1852 a Chicago commission merchant imported green peas from New Orleans in May by express; and three years later the *Chicago Press* stated that, since the extension of the railroad to the Ohio River, people in southern Illinois enjoyed fresh fruits no sooner than they did.<sup>71</sup> Berries were shipped in ice down the Mississippi to Louisiana; the Illinois Central was putting special fruit cars on its passenger trains to speed the movement of fruit to Chicago; and Oregon apples were sold in California. Other fruits were coming in from abroad—oranges and lemons from Sicily, bananas, pineapples.<sup>72</sup> The most important part of the trade, however, was the shipment from South to North. Georgia and Carolina fruitgrowers, responding to urban demands, had

<sup>70</sup> Not in tin cans, as was later common even for home canning.

<sup>71</sup> Cummings, p. 58.

<sup>72</sup> Cummings (p. 65) cites a newspaper item reporting that in January, 1859, a vessel sailing from Puerto Rico with a cargo of 300,000 oranges discharged but 90,000 at its destination, New Haven. The rest had rotted during the voyage.

begun to ship fruit from inland points to the seaports, from which steamboats took them north;<sup>73</sup> there was also some shipment of citrus fruit from Florida.

The New York markets were especially well supplied. The Camden and Amboy Railroad, from Camden to New York, had been started in 1838, largely for the benefit of market gardeners and from the nature of its traffic was commonly known as the "Pea Line." It began with occasional trips made by two cars; but demand increased steadily, and the road proved profitable, so that by 1840 trips were made daily, often with as many as sixteen cars, loaded with peas, peaches, potatoes, asparagus, livestock, and produce generally.<sup>74</sup> On a single night in June, 1847, the Erie's milk train brought in 80,000 baskets of strawberries; and by 1855 the strawberry business of New York City was said to be the largest in the world.<sup>75</sup> Other railroads were bringing in fruit and vegetables from the North and West. One effect of this was to lengthen the seasons during which fruits and vegetables could be purchased in the market. Between 1835 and 1865 the strawberry season was lengthened from one month to four, the grape season from four to six, the peach season from one to six, and the tomato season from four months to the full year. The season for sweet corn was increased from one month to five months, that for string beans from one month to nine months.<sup>76</sup>

Nevertheless, we should be on guard against exaggerating the effect of this. It was only the populous districts of the Northeast which could exert sufficient demand to make such shipments possible; and probably these were the only districts where the transportation was adequate to permit a very large segment of the population to draw on the outside for its supply of fruit and vegetables. Only the beginnings had been made in the transportation of early fruits and vegetables from South to North and the products of the western market gardens and

<sup>73</sup> *DeBow's Review*, XVII (1854), 629.

<sup>74</sup> B. H. Meyer (ed.), *History of Transportation in the United States before 1860* (Washington: Carnegie Institution, 1917), p. 385.

<sup>75</sup> Cummings, p. 57.

<sup>76</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 59.

Japanese textiles: coarse cotton prints, plain silk fabrics in bright colors, and even rich satins for those who could afford them. Other sections seemed less specialized, displaying assorted trinkets and knickknacks to appeal to the farmers who came in to trade. We noted fancy buttons, spools of thread (Japanese), foreign soap, and primary school readers with a pronounced Nationalist bias.

On repeated visits, we noticed that one counter was usually bare. A dealer told me that this was not from lack of merchants. Many were simply unwilling to pay the rather high taxes for the privilege of selling in the market. In fact, a considerable number of people just spread their wares on the ground outside, along the sides of the adjoining alleys. In wet weather, when the alleys became creeks, they raised their things on planks. Here, outside the market proper, the farmers sold their meats and vegetables. On very hot days we would buy melons from them to quench our thirst. But what interested us more were the junk dealers, who spread their secondhand goods here, in a sort of flea market. We rarely visited town without a glance in at the junk section. One of us usually managed to pick up something fairly interesting—a handsome, hand-woven saddle rug, a brocaded Mongol vest, a Buddha looted from a lama temple, or a Mongol knife or snuff bottle.

When we were in town near mealtime, we generally stayed in, as the camp cook had no imagination, and his meals were pretty terrible. Sometimes four or five of us would ride in for supper, just for a change of diet. A late afternoon canter always improved the appetite. Occasionally we dropped in on three Army boys who had recently come to Shanpa for AGAS. Their cook was as good as ours was bad, and they were fine hosts. More often we went to some Chinese inn.

We would tether our horses in the public stable yard, and after a short prowling through the market place, come back to eat at one of the restaurants on the main cross street of town. They never had a menu. The boy would bring me an ink slab with a brush and a slip of rice paper, and would then stand behind me, whisking away the flies with a cow's-tail switch while I wrote down the order in Chinese.

The specialties of the house were fried chicken livers with pungent "flower pepper" to dip them in, and a "sweet dish" of tart peaches or crisp-textured pears, in casings of melted sugar that

*Uses of a Case Illustrated on the Genitive in Latin (Lingua)*, has great interest outside Latin studies. Instead of the mixed criteria of traditional grammar, de Groot determines the functions in terms of grammatically distinctive uses only, and of regular as opposed to irregular and sporadic ones. The article is admirably precise and clear (except for a number of misprints), and it ends with a helpful brief index to the special terms used. *Classification of Cases and Use of Cases* (in *For Roman Jakobson*; see note 14) is to some extent a prolegomenon to the article just mentioned, and de Groot puts his own approach in the context of the contributions by Jakobson and Kuryłowicz to the theory of cases. The diagram representing the Latin case system is of great value, though one would not be easily persuaded that the nominative is 'without case meaning' in contrast to the others. In many IE languages the nominative is a specifically 'marked' case (as opposed, say, to the accusative) which indicates a definite rather than indefinite function.

According to the English summary of *O Konkurenci Infinitivu a Gerundu v Angličtině (Časopis pro Moderní Filologii)*, I. Poldauf relies on 'content' analysis to investigate the rivalry between the infinitive and gerund in modern English. But it is clear from his examples that he sees the importance also of collocation for describing the usage with regard to these two forms, and it may be in fact that this would be a more promising approach. In the course of *Aspect in the Old High German of Tatian (L)*, P. Scherrer usefully discusses his approach to the question of aspect and compares it with that of H. B. Garey published in 1954. Since both scholars are working in terms of familiar languages, their views are both valuable and readable for linguists whose concern is

English. Two further articles on German grammar deserve to be more widely known, H. Renicke's *Zu den neuhochdeutschen Reflexiva* and H. Nüsse's *Die grammatische Struktur des Deutschen*, both in *Zeitschrift für Deutsche Philologie*. The first proposes an approach which has considerable interest for the similar problems with English 'reflexive' verbs like *wash*; the second is a consideration of H. Glinz's recent book on German (and general) grammar.

*An Approach to Describing Usage of Language Variants*<sup>15</sup> is a very important contribution to the precise description of *actual* syntax (as opposed to idealized syntax which is so common in modern work). Illustrating from his research into the factors determining the occurrence of *daß* or zero-introducing German noun clauses, B. Ulvestad makes a powerful case for frequency surveying at the syntactical level and thus revealing and ranking the formal conditioning factors which produce variant structures. Work on English syntax along these lines has been proceeding for some time and cannot fail to benefit from analogous studies in other languages such as those of Ulvestad. He follows up the work just discussed with *Statistics in Syntactical Description of German (MLQ)*, in which he seeks to show that *langue* and *parole* are statistically distinguishable, the former corresponding to high regularity, the latter comprising the balance of irregularities in a given corpus. He repeats his convincing call for statistical surveys of syntactical and stylistic constructions. M. Aborn and H. Rubenstein write on *Word-Class Distribution in Sentences of Fixed Length (L)*. Having taken from popular magazines sentences six, eleven, and twenty-five words long, they classed the words

<sup>15</sup> Memoir 12 of the *International Journal of American Linguistics*.

very interesting to strangers. Mark Twain, in a letter dated June 1, 1857, wrote:

I visited the French market yesterday (Sunday) morning. . . . I thought I had seen all kinds of markets before—but that was a great mistake—this being a place such as I had never dreamed of before. Everything was arranged in such beautiful order, and had such an air of cleanliness and neatness that it was a pleasure to wander among the stalls. The pretty pyramids of fresh fruit looked so delicious. Oranges, lemons, pineapples, bananas, figs, plantains, watermelons, blackberries, raspberries, plums, and various other fruits were to be seen on one table, while the next one bore a load of radishes, onions, squashes, peas, beans, sweet potatoes—well, everything imaginable in the vegetable line—and still further on were lobsters, oysters, clams—then milk, cheese, cakes, coffee, tea, nuts, apples, hot rolls, butter, etc.—then the various kinds of meat and poultry.<sup>85</sup>

And the Countess Pulszky:

We hastened down Charles Street, and went into the large but unsymmetrical market-halls on the banks of the river. They were filled with sellers and buyers. Meat, fish, vegetables and fruits were spread on the long tables—peas, and carrots, and tomatoes, and melons, strawberries, pineapples and bananas. Huge plated coffee-kettles, eggs, butter, bread, and mutton-chops invited the early riser to breakfast.<sup>86</sup>

Cincinnati's markets were well supplied with the fruits of the region.<sup>87</sup> Even frontier towns had their markets: Denver in June, 1859, had on sale in its markets locally produced radishes, lettuce, onions, and peas.<sup>88</sup>

#### SUGAR, SALT, AND CONDIMENTS

*Sugar.*—Although the commissioner of agriculture was urging the cultivation of sugar beets,<sup>89</sup> only in Utah was there any refining or use of beet sugar. More than two-thirds of the cane

<sup>85</sup> Quoted in Minnie M. Brashear, *Mark Twain: Son of Missouri* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1934), p. 177.

<sup>86</sup> Francis and Theresa Pulszky, *White, Red, and Black* (New York: Redfield, 1853) II, 90. The count and countess, who came over with Kossuth, saw rather more of the country than did most visitors from abroad. Their recorded impressions are both fresh and revealing.

<sup>87</sup> Nichols, I, 159; Chambers, p. 159.

<sup>88</sup> Leroy R. Hafen, *Colorado: The Story of a Western Commonwealth* (Denver: Peerless Pub. Co., 1933), p. 124; cf. Albert D. Richardson, *Beyond the Mississippi* (Hartford, Conn.: American Pub. Co., 1867), p. 297.

<sup>89</sup> *Eighth Census: Agriculture*, Introduction.

ment of each topic and aspect of Sanskrit is brief, but it is well supported by liberal notes and up-to-date references. It is relevant to mention also a work of pure history, *Germanische Stammeskunde*,<sup>19</sup> since it so conveniently brings together the latest views on the complex movement of peoples with whose dialects students of English are concerned. The chapters are short and lucid, well illustrated by maps and accompanied by reading-lists. S. Bergsveinsson, *Eine neue Brechungstheorie* (*Zeitschrift für Phonetik*), is concerned with the Scandinavian phenomenon, particularly in the light of John Svensson's Lund monograph of 1944 and the discussions that this provoked. In *Die Anlautgruppen kn- und gn- im Neuenenglischen* (*Zeitschrift für Phonetik*), E. Gronke examines the theories of Horn, Kökeritz, and others regarding the process by which *kn-* and *gn-* yielded *n-*, and he argues for a medial stage *ʔn-*.

I. Fónagy contributes over 100 pages, *Über den Verlauf des Lautwandels* (*Acta Linguistica*, Budapest), surveying sound-change and the changing attitude of linguists to it from the time of the Neogrammarians. There is a useful collection of data on sound-change as it is going on today, and account is taken of the importance of orthography. As a whole, this article is of great value and relevance to linguistic scholarship and one would like to see it published separately. In *Internal Reconstruction of Phonemic Split (L)* J. W. Marchand outlines—and demonstrates the success of—a technique for Internal Reconstruction (i.e. without recourse to cognate languages as in comparatist reconstructions) through some very clear Gothic, Irish, and Lithuanian examples.

<sup>19</sup> By E. Schwartz. Heidelberg: Winter. pp. 248. DM. 16.80.

*On the Inherent Laws Governing the Development of Language* is the subject of a 35-page article (*Acta Linguistica*, Budapest) by L. Deme, the starting-point being Stalin's pronouncements on the nature of language and its relation to man's productive and social activity. It is an interesting polemical document in being one of the more accessible attempts to see linguistics in terms of Marxism: here indeed is the 'social component' which Firth often complains is missing from Western work, though one cannot say that Deme's arguments carry complete conviction. J. Engels asks *Y a-t-il du progrès dans la langue?* (N) and weighs Jespersen (for) and Vendryès, Bally, and others (against); on the whole, he feels the answer is 'yes and no', depending on the time at which and the viewpoint from which one is writing. G. Révész has a greater problem still: *The Origins and Prehistory of Language*.<sup>20</sup> This psychologist wrote a great deal on the origin of language and kindred topics (see YW xxxvi. 33), satisfying a popular interest in a subject which linguists avoid as futile. The present scholarly book, well translated, is to be welcomed for its information on and discussion of the history of such inquiry, and there is an excellent bibliography. But it must be admitted that the main arguments—the origin of language in imperatives and the thesis that deductions can be made from the languages of primitive peoples, for instance—are without support.

One is pleased to report another 44 pages (sections 13–20 inclusive) of O. Höfler's long study (see YW. xxxvi. 33), *Stammbaumtheorie, Wellentheorie, Entfaltungstheorie* in *Beiträge zur Geschichte der Deutschen Sprache und Literatur* (Tübingen). From Ger-

<sup>20</sup> Trans. by J. Butler. Longmans. pp. viii+240. 30s.

When he began the service with the traditional words, "*Introibo ad altare Dei*," recited in clear Latin, I could not help thinking that it was the strangest altar to our God that I had ever seen. The altar itself was a long lacquered table with projecting ends, such as the Chinese in more civilized regions place in the shrines to their ancestors. At the back of this was a small box for the Sacrament which, in turn, supported a small brass crucifix imported from Belgium. The table for the cruets and candlesticks against the side wall was a brass-studded chest, lacquered red, with mythological Chinese monsters romping across its doors. The altar boy had a lama temple bell that he rang for the Sanctus and the Consecration.

Almost immediately the Chinese congregation began a dismal, droning chant, led by an old woman with a cracked voice. They kept this up with only an occasional pause throughout the service. From what little I could understand, it seemed to consist of interminable prayers that did not have any bearing on the actual ceremony. No doubt it helped to keep up the interest of the Chinese, since most of them had no idea what was going on at the altar, but to us it was disagreeably distracting. Only the calm sincerity of Father Fan gave the service its proper dignity.

After Mass, on our second Sunday at camp, the week after we arrived, the C.O. suggested a visit to Father Schram, who lived some three hours' ride to the north of us. There was no direct road to Manhui, the small town where he had his mission station, so we took Lao Tsai, the head ma-fu, to help us find the way.

Old Tsai was not a local man, but he knew this border country well and could always be depended on to get us where we wanted to go. He was an old border cavalryman, and had served under the great Northern warlord Wu P'ei-fu, beside whom General Fu and his old boss, Yen Hsi-shan, were smalltimers. When Wu "got religion," Tsai accompanied him to his retreat in a Buddhist monastery. But life there was too quiet for an old cavalryman. His narrow, weather-beaten face cracked into a wry grin when he told me about it. After a year of temple life, he left to join General Fu's army in Suiyuan. Now that he was getting old, he could no longer be as active, and he had been lent to the camp, along with the horses, to see that they were well cared for.

It was wonderful to see him with the horses; he was so understanding. It was a great blow to us all—and to the animals, too,

200 pounds of salt in the census year 1860 was supplemented by imports of 1,174,326,060 pounds, giving an annual per capita consumption of about 60 pounds—a rather meaningless figure in light of the many industrial uses to which it was and is put. But a comparison of this with the contemporary per capita consumption of Great Britain (25 pounds) and France (21.5) makes it clear that no lack should have been felt in this country.<sup>98</sup> The common use of salted meats and salted foods of all kinds—whether the result of taste or of necessity—also seems to show that there was plenty of salt.

Some idea of the consumption of spices and seasonings may be obtained from the import statistics. In the year ending June 30, 1860—a typical year—the United States imported 1,700,285 pounds of cassia, 1,240,683 pounds of ginger, 8,424,921 pounds of black pepper, 1,603,675 pounds of pimento, and substantial amounts of cinnamon, cloves, mace, nutmeg, and red pepper.<sup>99</sup> Peppers and sage were grown at home, and tomato sauce had become a popular seasoning.

*Other foods.*—The confectionary trade was carried on widely, but on a small scale—most of Philadelphia's two hundred confectioners did some manufacturing,<sup>100</sup> and that is probably typical. Fancy goods were imported from France. A popular ingredient in desserts was "Russia isinglass"—a gelatine made from sturgeon's air bladders. By the fifties, however, it had competition in the more inexpensive gelatines of domestic manufacture.<sup>101</sup>

#### THE PUBLIC WATER SUPPLY

*Water in the large cities.*—In the first years of the century few cities had municipal water systems, either public or private.

<sup>98</sup> *Eighth Census: Manufactures*, pp. cxcvii-cxcviii.

<sup>99</sup> *Commerce and Navigation Report, 1860*, pp. 172-291.

<sup>100</sup> Freedley, *Philadelphia* (1858 ed.), p. 228.

<sup>101</sup> *Mrs. Putnam's Receipt Book* (new and enl. ed.; Boston: Phillips, Sampson & Co., 1858) recommended "Cox's patent refined sparkling gelatine" as a cheaper substitute for Russia isinglass in some of the receipts. One of the more popular gelatines was that made by Peter Cooper.



As population grew and cities expanded, people found it harder to go to streams for their water; wells and cisterns were endangered by the accumulation of the contents of privy vaults and rivers by industrial pollution. There was no sudden shift to public systems, but one by one cities installed pumps, constructed reservoirs, and laid mains. By 1860 considerable progress had been made, although it was several decades later before the work was anything like completed. Fite finds that in the few years preceding the Civil War municipal water systems were established in New York, Brooklyn, Cleveland, Detroit, Hartford, Jersey City, Louisville, Cincinnati, and Boston. When the war began there were 68 public water systems, of which 59 were in the North and 9 in the Confederacy, and 80 private systems.<sup>102</sup> Even such northern cities as Providence, Portland, and Milwaukee had no public provision for water whatsoever; but, as Cole points out, the number shows a considerable advance over the 83 systems in existence in 1850.<sup>103</sup> It must be remembered, however, that these were not systems of purification; they were merely systems for conveying lake or river water to where the water was to be used.

Portland, Maine, had no public water supply; townspeople used filtered rainwater or obtained their water from springs and wells.<sup>104</sup> Portsmouth, New Hampshire, had constructed an "aqueduct" in 1797, and two of the original wooden pipes were still in use. Hartford had, by 1862, nearly thirty-one miles of water main in use, supplying about 26,000 persons (857 families from yard hydrants, 3,389 from inside fixtures) at rates ranging from five to ten dollars a family a year. Providence had no system until 1871. Boston's system, which brought Cochituate water into the city, had been completed in 1848; and in 1859, 17,000 dwelling houses were supplied with water at rates beginning at

<sup>102</sup> Emerson David Fite, *Social and Industrial Conditions in the North during the Civil War* (New York: Macmillan, 1910), pp. 216-17.

<sup>103</sup> A. C. Cole, pp. 180-81.

<sup>104</sup> The following summary has as its sources the reports of city water departments, descriptions of the water-supply systems, local histories, and various other material. Specific citation seems unnecessary.

six dollars. New York City's Croton aqueduct had been completed in the forties, though the system was not regarded as finished until the completion of the Central Park reservoir in 1862; in 1856 there were 53,745 customers, the most common rate being nine dollars a year. Brooklyn's new system, bringing water from the Long Island hill slopes, was being constructed and was completed in 1862. Albany's system, drawing water from near-by lakes and reservoirs, was being improved but was hardly satisfactory. Troy's hydrant water, pumped from a brook, was thought pretty good. Jersey City's water system, constructed in the early fifties, included an eight-mile aqueduct from the Passaic; rates began at six dollars a year. Camden had had a private waterworks system since 1845.

Philadelphia's system, though dating in part from the early years of the century, was supposed to be the best in the country. It drew upon the Schuylkill and Delaware rivers and charged customers only five dollars a year. Pittsburgh had installed new reservoirs and pumps in 1842. Cincinnati's system had been considerably expanded in the latter fifties, with new reservoirs and new pumps; the Ohio River water seems to have left something to be desired in the way of purity. Rates ranged from seven dollars a year for a one-room house to sixteen for a twenty-room house. Cleveland's system, drawing on Lake Erie, had also been expanded by new equipment; the base rate was five dollars a year for five-room houses. Detroit's new system, still using many wood mains, drew water from the Detroit River; in 1858 it supplied 6,474 families at rates ranging from five to ten dollars a year. Chicago's system, still being expanded, had by 1860 ninety-one miles of pipe, and by 1858 was supplying 5,640 families, the most common rate being ten dollars. Not until the lake tunnel was built in the sixties was the water supply satisfactory. St. Louis' system, drawing water from the Mississippi, had been built in the early thirties; in 1860 it was being strained to the limits of its capacity.

The water supply of Washington, D.C., was completely inadequate; and, although there was some talk of improvements, the people still drew much of their water from wells, polluted

because there was no sewerage. Baltimore's system to obtain water from the Gunpowder River was not completed until 1862; but, by 1861, 16,419 dwellings were being supplied, the common rate being eight dollars. Charleston was entirely dependent upon cisterns and wells. Savannah, in the fifties, constructed a system to supply the city from the Savannah River. New Orleans had, by the end of the forties, expended more than a million dollars for facilities to pump water to all parts of the city—thirty-seven and three-quarters miles. Mobile's city waterworks brought spring water to the city from a stream some miles distant. Memphis in 1860 made an appropriation for a waterworks system, but the war prevented its construction. Louisville's system was completed just before the beginning of the war, but as late as 1862 there were only 293 residences connected with the system.

*Water in the smaller cities.*—Throughout the North, and to a lesser extent throughout the country, the towns and smaller cities were providing themselves with systems by which water from near-by lakes or streams could be made available. Usually these systems were not elaborate—an "aqueduct" and a few water mains, both fed by gravity; occasionally a larger system with pump and reservoir. Such towns as Rockland, Maine, and Bellows Falls, Vermont, had simple systems. Charlestown, Massachusetts, was served by the Boston system, and by 1,728 wells, many of which were not fit for use. Worcester, Lowell, Concord (New Hampshire), Gloucester, Newburyport, and Woonsocket, among others, had no systems, and Danbury and New Haven were just constructing them. In New York State, Watertown and Newburg had systems of a sort, Poughkeepsie and Rochester did not. Lancaster, Pennsylvania, had a system to provide itself with water from the Conestoga. Sandusky, Ohio, used wells, while Zanesville drew upon the Muskingum. There was no public water supply in Jackson, Michigan; Davenport, Iowa; or in Belleville, Joliet, or Quincy, Illinois; none in Hannibal, Missouri, or in Beloit, Fond du Lac, Madison, Oshkosh, or Racine, Wisconsin.

Richmond, Virginia, pumped water from the James River,

J. L. Jarrett give us a practical teaching book in the theory and practice of communication.<sup>31</sup> The early chapters seem particularly useful, dealing with the nature, function, and patterning of signs inside and outside language, and with other topics of similarly central importance, each chapter ending with problems set out for discussion, exercises, and a manageable reading list. The book might well be used with elementary students in English and Philosophy in this country. A book by B. F. Huppé and J. Kaminsky<sup>32</sup> has a similar field and scope to the preceding, though more limited to conventional aspects of logic and language and lacking the positive argument and clear presentation of the other. Nevertheless, it is full of fascinating data and many of the exercises are of value: the question is, for whom? what body of students have the authors in mind? Some of the material (e.g. on the history of English) would be child's play for students reading English and virtually irrelevant for those who are not.

*Langage des machines et langage humain*<sup>33</sup> gives a very clear account in brief space of the analogies between telegraphic codes, those used in computers, the phonic codes of speech, and their written correlatives. There can be few simpler introductions to the theory of information and the Boolean algebra requisite for understanding many of the developments in the new co-operation between mathematics and linguistics. In the *Proceedings of the 1952 linguistic congress* (see note 2 above), we find several speakers complaining of (and some displaying) insufficient knowledge of 'information theory'. Such complaints would be unlikely today by reason of books like

this of Belevitch and through the activity in this country of scholars like E. C. Cherry. The latter has an important 35-page article in *Methodos* which is *A History of the Theory of Information*, a fascinating account of early codes and symbolism from Ogam to Morse, the development of telegraphy and telephony, and the rise of a new need—for 'economy', and the various methods of signal compression that have been developed in consequence. We are given a lucid introduction to modern statistical theory (especially with reference to Wiener and Shannon), and there is a section on 'Brains, Real and Artificial' which should do much to dissipate popular myth-conceptions about modern robotry. In a fourth and final section, Cherry expounds some of the mathematics of information. He was also responsible for editing the volume of *Information Theory*,<sup>34</sup> reports of a London Symposium in September 1955. The first section of some 50 pages ('Fundamentals') is devoted to the theory itself for those whose interests lie here and whose mathematics can cope with it. A third section ('Language Analysis and Mechanical Translation') and parts of a fourth ('Meaning and the Human Senses') have wider relevance. There are contributions from D. A. Bell and A. S. C. Ross; W. Fucks on word-formation; S. Ceccato and E. Maretti on the research of the Italian Operational School (covering roughly the same ground as the *Methodos* article which is reported below, but more fully). There is a brief piece by A. D. Booth (having oddly little to do with its title 'Influence of Context on Translation') in which—not the only time this year—he mentions his fear that the subject of machine translation may 'fall into disrepute'; it is hard to see why he should refer to demonstrations which do not require,

<sup>31</sup> *Language and Informal Logic*. Longmans. pp. viii+274. 22s. 6d.

<sup>32</sup> *Logic and Language*. New York: Alfred A. Knopf. pp. iii+216. \$2.50.

<sup>33</sup> By V. Belevitch. Brussels: Office de Publicité, S.A. pp. 119.

<sup>34</sup> Butterworth. pp. xii+401. 70s.

Brazilian coffee.<sup>106</sup> In New England coffee was frequently adulterated; in the western and Middle states substitutes (such as chicory or a mixture of burned and ground peas and rye) were used by the poorer elements of the population.<sup>107</sup> It was believed that  $\frac{1}{4}$  pound a week, or 13 pounds a year, was a very low figure for the consumption of those who actually used coffee and that not more than half the population (including children) could have been coffee-drinkers.<sup>108</sup> Much of the coffee was roasted at home, and even when roasted coffee was purchased it was likely to be ground at home. The coffee mill was part of the standard kitchen equipment.

The consumption of tea in 1860, as at present, was far below that of coffee—an average per capita consumption of 0.76 pounds a year for the decade 1851–60, as compared with 0.83 in the period 1921–25 and 0.74 in 1926–30.<sup>109</sup> Both tea and coffee were relatively inexpensive in the East; farther west, transportation costs put them in the luxury class.<sup>110</sup>

*Cider.*—The consumption of cider is something one would like to know more about. From Colonial times cider had been almost the national drink. Apples had been cultivated for their cider-producing qualities rather than for eating; and the popularity of cider extended to similar drinks made from other fruits, such as “perry,” or pear cider. Unfortunately, the Census reports, both state and federal, are so incomplete as to be almost useless. All over the country farmers used at least their bruised and windfall apples to make a few barrels for home consump-

<sup>106</sup> David A. Wells, *et al.*, *Report of a Commission Appointed for a Revision of the Revenue System, 1865–1866* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1866), pp. 65–66.

<sup>107</sup> In the old Northwest, wheat, barley, peas, beans, dandelion roots, and browned bread were among the substitutes (H. E. Cole, *Stage Coach and Tavern Tales of the Old Northwest*, ed. Louise Phelps Kellogg [Cleveland: Arthur H. Clark Co., 1930], p. 215). In Utah burned beans or toasted corn were used (Richard Burton, *The City of the Saints* [London: Longman, Green, Longman, & Roberts, 1861], p. 388). There was also a certain amount of fraudulent adulteration.

<sup>108</sup> Wells and others, pp. 65–66.

<sup>109</sup> *Statistical Abstract*, LVII (1935), Table 639, p. 646.

<sup>110</sup> See the tables in Appen. C.

each case of the features (gender, declension, soft or hard stem, &c.) of the corresponding Russian word. The other has the Russian words in their indicated order. There is an excellent explanation of the way in which the morphological and some syntactical changes are accomplished mechanically, but beyond being told that poly-semantic words are dealt with 'as a result of the context analysis', we learn nothing of how the context is analysed (by the machine?) for this purpose; the booklet contains some examples of the texts translated (or theoretically translatable?) from English to Russian by the BESM. It seems certain that the Russian achievement in this field is at least as sophisticated as that of the western countries which are engaged in the work. The Russian experiment is also briefly reported by D. Panov in *MT*, and the same journal reports a booklet in Russian by this linguist on automatic translation and the methods used with the BESM computer.

The progress made by the Scuola Operativa Italiana in this field is reported by S. Ceccato, *Il Contributo italiana al problema della traduzione meccanica (Methodos)*; see also the report connected with note 34 above). He discusses the lack of corresponding signs between languages, the problem of multiple meaning, and finally the lack of adequate syntactic description. He includes a brief example of the types of syntactic correlation set up by the SOI to tackle this latter need.

*MT* iii. 1 is devoted to the work of the Cambridge Language Research Group and to a report of the Group's meeting and exchange of papers in August 1955. After a rather general discussion of linguistic analysis and translation, led by J. R. Firth, there is a summary of Miss M. Masterman's paper on new techniques in syntactical analysis. Whatever else comes out

of the Group's work (and the same can be said of the SOI), it is clear that linguistics is going to profit from the experimentation in this direction; one feels there is particularly great possibility in the Boolean lattice ideas of presenting syntactic structure, and these are also well illustrated in the paper by A. F. Parker-Rhodes which is concerned with an outline of the computer programme devised for translating Chinese into English. This is linguistically of very great interest, though it is made obvious that reasonably practicable machine translation is still well in the future. Indeed, R. H. Richens (*Preprogramming for Mechanical Translation*) seems to conceive of a human translator working with a machine as a sort of collaborator, though this would surely be unlikely to have economic sanction. But Richens's work is impressive and again chiefly on the syntactical side, though as Miss Masterman remarked in the ensuing discussion, a basic problem remains in 'the search for objective criteria in setting up the lattice interrelations'. (For Crossland's contribution, see p. 41 above.) Another member of the Cambridge Group, M. A. K. Halliday, writes separately on *The Linguistic Basis of a Mechanical Thesaurus (MT)*. The argument is that the grammar and vocabulary of a language exhibit a high degree of determination affecting all utterances, whether translated from another language or not. Machine translation can exploit this (to cope with the lack of translation equivalents between categories of different languages) by ordering the elements into systems within which determination operates, and by working out, with descriptive linguistic methods, the criteria governing the choice among those elements ranged as terms in one system. Lexical items so ordered form a 'thesaurus', and the thesaurus series is the lexical

## CHAPTER III

### WHAT PEOPLE ATE

#### SECTIONAL DIFFERENCES IN FOOD CONSUMPTION

*What we know and what we don't know.*—In chapter ii we were on fairly safe ground. The production and port statistics I have used, though not always accurate or complete, are probably not subject to errors of great magnitude; and much of what I have been saying may be easily verified. This knowledge of what foods were available is some guide to the consumption of the country as a whole. It is when we try to discover what differences in consumption there were between different income groups and different parts of the country that we get into difficulties. It is not that there was anything about the diet of the Americans which could not have been found out easily at the time. Rather, it is the reverse. What people were eating—and what they were wearing—were matters so commonplace that no one felt called upon to say anything about them: what is commonplace at one time is likely to be the most difficult thing to find out about at a later time. I have had to make use of information which is at best incomplete, is almost always vague, and at times is actually biased. Much of what I shall have to say in the following pages is put forth uncertainly and tentatively, but I shall try to indicate the points where my doubts are greatest.

*Food consumption in the North.*<sup>1</sup>—One peculiar characteristic of the American diet was the large amount of meat consumed. As I shall point out at the close of this chapter, meat consumption reached an all-time high in this country around 1860, and the numerous comments of visitors from abroad indicate that

<sup>1</sup> In Appen. C, I have included such tables of price data as seemed most useful. A few other items of price data, which cannot be easily given in tabular form, are scattered through the footnotes of this chapter.

the use of meat here was much greater than it was abroad. Horace P. Batcheler's remarks are hardly more extreme than others which might be cited:

As a flesh-consuming people, the Americans have no equal in the world. They usually have meat three times a day, and not a small quantity at each meal either. I have seen gentlemen choose as many as seven or eight different kinds of animal food from the bill of fare, and after having all arranged before him in a row, in the national little white dishes, commence at one end and eat his way through in half a dozen minutes.<sup>2</sup>

As it happens, for extended comment on the quality of the meat we are largely dependent upon the books of these same travelers, most of them Englishmen, with peculiarly British notions as to what meat ought to be and how it ought to be prepared.<sup>3</sup> They were agreed that the beef and veal were both good and cheap but that the mutton was not fit to eat. Pork was the meat most commonly consumed; but, while it was cheap, it was not to the British taste, and the ham and bacon particularly left much to be desired. The poultry was usually good, though somewhat stringy. Oysters and other shellfish were plentiful and tasty; and, while the fish lacked variety and flavor, some kinds, particularly sheephead and shad, were very good indeed.

Meat-consumption habits can hardly be understood without taking into account the lack of refrigeration facilities. Contemporary writers, impressed by the greatly increased use of ice during the first half of the century, are likely to mislead later readers. In 1855 *DeBow's Review* boasted:

In America the use of ice is as widely extended among the people as the heat is, and with a very trifling individual cost. We use it for seven or eight months

<sup>2</sup> *Jonathan at Home* (London: W. H. Collingridge, 1864), p. 45; cf. also J. D. Burns, p. 8; and Nichols, I, 368.

<sup>3</sup> See Thomas Colley Gratton, *Civilized America* (London: Bradbury & Evans, 1859), I, 61-64, 106-7; Alfred Bunn, *Old England and New England* (Philadelphia: A. Hart, 1853), pp. 298-99; and George Augustus Sala, *My Diary in America in the Midst of War* (London: Tinsley Bros., 1865), I, 409-11.

Gratton was the consul at Boston for some years and had ample opportunity to become acquainted with the food-consumption habits of the well-to-do. For his rather contemptuous opinion of American cookery see I, 106-8, 265-66. Sala, as a newspaper correspondent, had wider opportunities for observation, and his comments—on this as on other subjects—are interesting and refreshing, though not altogether free from prejudice.



lish. The result is a useful piece of work which will be of great value to all future workers on historical English syntax. H. Pilch, in *ME i- beim Participium Präteriti (Ang)*, deals in some detail with the distribution of the prefix in the Middle English dialects, with the type of word in which it is found, and with its eventual loss in the southern dialects.

The late T. A. Knott had originally edited the letter A for the *Middle English Dictionary*, and this is now being re-edited on the plan adopted for the parts already published.<sup>4</sup> Particularly noticeable in these two parts is the appearance of many technical medical terms, and the number of Old English words surviving only in *Lazamon*. They include an excellent analysis of the twelve different senses of *abiden*, and of the various uses of *after* in twenty columns. Inevitably occasional disagreement is possible: *abak*, 1(c), *Wycl. Apol.* 75, rather 'restrain' than 'keep away, detain'; *abiden*, 12(a), *O & N* 1702, 'wait for' rather than 'face (in battle)'; *afoled*, *O & N* 206, 'fooled' rather than 'infatuated'; under *amie*<sup>2</sup> the *Ancrene Riwe* quotation makes no sense if taken from French *a me*, and the other two quotations seem to represent French *amie*; no real evidence appears for a compound *aboutegon*; the etymology and interpretation of *alunde* are doubtful; while the only example of *alwight* looks like a mistake for *ill-wight*.

On individual words A. Rynell, *A Note on 'Lynde(s)' in Robert Mannyng's 'Chronicle' (Studier i Modern Språkvetenskap)*, disagrees with the gloss 'open space(s)' and shows that there is no reason to connect the word with anything but the name of the

tree. In 'Chalking' *Furs (NM)* T. F. Mustanoja notes the occurrence of the phrase in the accounts of Henry, earl of Derby (1391). It refers to the medieval practice of treating new furs with powdered chalk, a sense not previously found in English but mentioned in twelfth- and thirteenth-century French verse. A. J. Bliss, *The Auchinleck 'St Margaret' and 'St Katherine' (NQ)*, notes the meaning 'dead' for *oliue*, derives *gouz* 'look' from some such etymon as \**gogian*, and takes *wigtine* to be a compound whose elements are recorded in *O.E.D.* s.v. *wee*, *tine*. In a later note K. Sisam points out that this sense of *oliue* is in fact in *O.E.D.* A. H. Orrick suggests that in its context '*Declynede*', *Passus IV*, L. 133, '*Piers the Plowman*', *A-Text (PQ)* is to be taken as an adjective, and the translation would be: 'Clerks that were confessors grouped themselves together in order to interpret this quickly recited clause (i.e. the macaronic verse of lines 126-7).'

J. J. Lamberts, *The Development of 'Made' (JEGP)*, suggests that the shortened forms may have originated with *take*. An early [tak kep] or perhaps [tak:ep] became [takep], which might then result in a form *ta*, the changes being analogically transferred to *make*. In *The Loss of Long Consonants and the Rise of Voiced Fricatives in Middle English (L)* H. Kurath shows that in all parts of the North and North-east Midlands phonically long consonants had lost their phonic status by 1200 because of the lengthening of short vowels in open syllables of disyllabic words. But in the South-east Midlands, and in all dialects in which lengthening of *i* and *u* did not take place in this position, the phonically long consonants retained their phonemic status until about 1400, when their elimination is indicated by the loss of final unstressed *-e*. It was the loss of phonemic length in

<sup>4</sup> *Middle English Dictionary: Parts A. 1 and 2*, by H. Kurath and S. M. Kuhn. Michigan U.P. and O.U.P. pp. i+124, 125-252. 21s. each part.

was used in the home was almost certainly used to ice drinks (the popularity of ice water was another strange American "institution," which no doubt led foreigners to exaggerate Americans' use of ice) and to make ice cream and similar occasional delicacies. Even in the North there were few home refrigerators.<sup>11</sup>

Lacking refrigeration, consumers could not purchase their fresh meat a very long time before it was to be cooked. This cannot have been a very serious problem. The real question is whether local slaughterhouses killed animals frequently enough, throughout the whole year, to make fresh meat always obtainable at the meat markets.<sup>12</sup> There is no very satisfactory information as to how much beef and veal were consumed in the North. Substantial exports of beef, as well as of pork, were being made year after year. In the Northeast, where distances were short, the cities were drawing upon the surrounding countryside. Beef and veal were certainly to be had in all large cities, and probably in all communities, by those who desired it and were able to pay for it; but there had been little attempt to improve stock, the grazing was restricted and the season short, so that the meat was likely to be tough and stringy. Although there was a noticeable shift from wool breeds to mutton breeds of sheep, mutton was rather poor in quality and entered consumption only to a minor degree; in the West it was seldom to be found. The staple meat product for the North, as for the country as a whole, was pork in its various forms, but especially salt pork. Hogs were easily fed and even in the cities and towns of the North served as scavengers. Hogs were also better adapted to the practice of home slaughtering and curing than were the heavy beef animals. Modern physicians prob-

<sup>11</sup> The thirteen establishments making refrigerators and water-coolers reporting to the Eighth Census (*Manufactures*, p. 740) had an output valued at only \$162,550; and New York State, whose factories had produced 5,300 refrigerators (besides 300 meat safes) in 1855, in 1865 produced only 700 (*Census of the State of New York for 1855*, p. 442; *Census . . . for 1865*, p. 497). In Chicago only those used iceboxes who could afford to purchase ice, taken from Calumet River and Calumet Lake in the winter and occasionally from northern points (Pierce, II, 472).

<sup>12</sup> Figures on local slaughterhouses, if obtainable, would throw light on this question.

ably would disagree with Nichols' diagnosis, but I think many of his contemporaries were of his opinion: "Pork and lard, consumed in enormous quantities, and even by the poorest people, to an extent quite unknown in any country in Europe, cause much disease."<sup>13</sup>

Farmers all kept domestic poultry; and chickens, ducks, and geese were on sale in the city markets. Figures for the consumption of poultry around 1860 are hard to find: a million dollars' worth of poultry was sold in Boston in 1848, and another million dollars' worth of eggs.<sup>14</sup> Venison cannot have entered much into the diet of the poorer classes except in the less settled parts of the country, but it did take a place much larger than it does today among the foods consumed by the well-to-do. Sportsmen could also eat prairie fowl, grouse, quail, woodcock, snipe, and plover, and in the Northwest these were normal articles of consumption.<sup>15</sup>

Of the preserved meats, corned beef appears to have been fairly common; prices were quoted for it in several collections of 1860 price data. For those to whom even corned beef was too expensive, there was mess beef. But in preserved, as in fresh, meats, pork was the mainstay of the population—hams and bacon for the middle and upper classes, sausages, especially on the farms, and pickled pork, "sow belly," and "fat back" for the poorest classes.<sup>16</sup> Canned meat made up only an infinitesimal part of the popular consumption: Collins estimates that up to the beginning of the Civil War not more than five million cans

<sup>13</sup> Nichols, I, 368.

<sup>14</sup> *DeBow's Review*, XV (1853), 507-8.

<sup>15</sup> Cf. the tables in Appen. C. "[In Chicago] beef, pork, mutton, and game meats such as venison, buffalo, prairie chicken, grouse, and quail graced the menus of hotels and homes, while the use of tripe, because it was inexpensive, increased. Sea foods were common, Chicago epicures in the early 'fifties 'luxuriating' in fresh fish three days from the sea, and whitefish and trout could be had from the Upper Lakes" (Pierce, II, 461).

<sup>16</sup> As Cummings points out (p. 16), not only does pork keep well, but its flavor is actually improved by the preservative processes. Cummings thinks one reason for the small consumption of mutton was the fact that it was difficult either to keep fresh or to preserve.

of everything—meat, fish, fruits, vegetables—had been produced.<sup>17</sup>

There is every reason to suppose that the population of the North was well supplied with fish. The annual catch was large, the prices low, and those not living on coast or river could have fish shipped in or at least eat preserved fish. A cookbook published in Boston, popular enough to run through several editions, gave directions for the preparation and cooking of cod, shad, bluefish, halibut, mackerel, salmon, scrod, eels, perch, smelt, haddock, tautog, and turbot; for various chowders; and for shellfish.<sup>18</sup> Freedley lists among the fish to be caught near Philadelphia a great variety of river fish (sunfish, herring, shad, roach, cat, perch, rock, lamprey, common eel, pike, sucker, sturgeon, gar) and sea fish (cod, sea bass, blackfish, sheepshead, Spanish mackerel, haddock, pollock, mullet, halibut, flounder, sole, plaice, skait, progey), as well as the ever present shellfish.<sup>19</sup> In a western state like Illinois there were perch, white, black, and rock bass, pike-perch, catfish, muskellunge, whitefish, lake trout, and sturgeon.<sup>20</sup> The fact that fishing was about the only sport open to many boys and men must have been reflected in the diet. Shellfish, and especially oysters, occupied a place in contemporary descriptions of American life which must be out of all proportion to their actual consumption by the common people.<sup>21</sup> Still, all the eastern cities had numerous "oyster saloons," where one could eat as many as he wished for a quarter or so;<sup>22</sup> and western cities—Cincinnati, Chicago,

<sup>17</sup> P. 15.

<sup>18</sup> *Mrs. Putnam's Receipt Book*.

<sup>19</sup> Edwin T. Freedley, *Philadelphia and Its Manufactures* (Philadelphia: Edward Young & Co., 1867), p. 107.

<sup>20</sup> T. C. Clark, "The Prairie State," *Atlantic Monthly*, VII (1861), 579-95.

<sup>21</sup> See especially Batcheler, pp. 53-54, and Nichols, I, 267-71. There are also interesting comments in [Isabella Lucy Bird Bishop], *The Englishwoman in America* (London: John Murray, 1856), pp. 352-53; William Hancock, *An Emigrant's Five Years* (London: T. Gautley Newby, 1860), p. 75; Charles Mackay, *Life and Liberty in America* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1859), pp. 32-33; and similar accounts.

<sup>22</sup> Oysters for home consumption sold for 25 cents a quart in Boston (advertisement in *Boston Evening Transcript*, February 1, 1860).

St. Louis, and others—were daily supplied with barrels of fresh oysters by express from the East or the Gulf.

Dried cod and pickled mackerel continued to be staple articles of food consumption. They were cheap, they would keep indefinitely, and they could supplement the diet when fresh meat was hard to get. With the possible exception of canned oysters and lobsters—and the price of them must have put them in the luxury class<sup>23</sup>—canned fish were seldom eaten.

What specialized dairy herds there were in the country were in the North; but difficulties of transporting milk and of keeping it sweet probably kept consumption at a low level. Table 23 in Appendix C offers some clue to milk consumption, although I have no way of knowing how accurate the table is and the lack of any data on states in the Deep South rules out some of the comparisons one would like to make. For the thirteen states for which there is any information the per capita consumption of fluid milk was just under 1 pint a day, ranging from 110 quarts a year in Massachusetts up to 258 quarts a year in Vermont. In 1853 *Hunt's* had estimated the milk consumption of New York City at about 204 quarts per capita a year, or from 1 to 1½ pints per capita a day;<sup>24</sup> this was almost four times as high as its estimate had been ten years earlier.<sup>25</sup> The small amount allocated to milk in one family budget<sup>26</sup> may indicate a much lower milk consumption among the laboring classes; and certainly consumption was lower in the cities than on the farms. The low quality and adulteration of the milk supply of the cities has already been mentioned.

The consumption of butter, as we have seen, compares favorably with that of the present; what the quality was is another

<sup>23</sup> A small can cost about 50 cents (Collins, p. 13.)

<sup>24</sup> In "The Milk Trade of New York," XXVIII (1853), 682-89, based on John Mullaly, *The Milk Trade in New York and Vicinity* (New York: Fowler & Wells). Mullaly's estimate for the total annual consumption was 120,600,000 quarts (\$5,437,000), which *Hunt's* thought too low, guessing that the annual value would not be less than \$5,500,000. Annual per capita expenditure for milk would be \$9.16. Milk was retailed in Chicago, in the fifties, at 6 cents a quart (Pierce, II, 461); for its price elsewhere see Appen. C.

<sup>25</sup> Cummings, p. 54, citing *Hunt's*, XIII (1845), 389.

<sup>26</sup> See below, p. 394.

question, and one not easily answered. Bunn thought the butter was "filthy," except in Pennsylvania; and Gratton thought that the butter, like everything else, was salted too much.<sup>27</sup> Ice cream seems to have been highly popular, at least in comparison with its consumption abroad. Nichols attributed this to the climate (again, I suspect he is not to be taken too literally):

There are two elements of New York and American life which English tourists can never appreciate, nor English readers comprehend. They are ice-cream, and oysters. It is impossible, in a cool climate like that of England, to imagine the luxury of ice, iced drinks, and frozen foods and sweetmeats, in a hot one. For four months in a year Americans eat ices and drink iced drinks. Ice is everywhere. The first thing in a summer morning in Virginia is an immense mint julep sparkling with ice. . . .

But the ice-creams are the most ubiquitous luxury. They are served in public gardens, in saloons that hold a thousand people, at the confectioners, at the uniform price of sixpence, and generally of an excellent quality and flavour.<sup>28</sup>

In 1850 the editor of *Godey's Lady's Book* had remarked that ice cream had become one of the necessities of life—a party without it would be like a breakfast without bread or a dinner without a roast.<sup>29</sup> Mrs. Bishop noted that on the lake steamboat on which she was traveling large glass "tubs" of vanilla ice cream were brought in for dinner;<sup>30</sup> and a large share of the surviving hotel and dining-room menus have ice cream and ices listed among the desserts. In New York a favorite amusement was to go to Taylor's for ice cream. How far it entered into the home consumption of the common people is another matter. Mrs. Putnam's cookbook devoted three pages to ice-cream receipts; and the use of farm-stored ice made it relatively inexpensive; but I suspect that for most people ice cream was still regarded as a special treat.

The consumption of cheese was somewhat lower than it later became, and I think probably much lower than it was abroad at the time. I have no very satisfactory explanation for this:

<sup>27</sup> Bunn, pp. 298-99; Gratton, I, 106-7.

<sup>28</sup> Nichols, I, 267-68. The emphasis on the use of ice in America, as contrasted with its use in the Old World, is again to be noted.

<sup>29</sup> XLI (1850), 124, cited by Cummings, p. 40.

<sup>30</sup> Isabella Bishop, p. 176.

if we attribute it to differences in taste we still have to explain how those differences arose. The large consumption of meat and the small consumption of cheese are probably not unrelated, and it may be that, when meat and other foods were so cheap, there was little desire for cheese.

The relative amounts of the various kinds of bread—white and whole-wheat bread, rye bread, and corn bread—entering into consumption in the North is something I should like to know more about. From the fact that in the country as a whole the per capita consumption of wheat was even greater than it is now and from the fact that the proportion of corn breads to wheat bread was much larger in the South than in the North, one gathers that—though farm families, at least, must have had corn bread fairly frequently—most of the bread consumed in the North must have been wheat bread. This predominance of wheat bread in the diet is confirmed by the surprise of visiting northerners at the common use of corn bread in the South. Descriptions of the milling processes then in use would lead one to believe that the flour was bolted, and therefore white.<sup>31</sup> Much of the flour, however, and perhaps even most of it was still being ground by old-fashioned mills; this was especially true of the flour ground for farm consumption and was even more true of corn than of wheat. This was a time, too, when Sylvester Graham, who gave his name to Graham flour, had a large following, and this may also have contributed toward a large use of whole-grain flours.<sup>32</sup> Compared with wheat, little rye was grown, and its production was largely limited to the Middle states. It does not follow, of course, that it was consumed where it was grown, but one is inclined to believe that the German and Dutch element in the populations of New York and Pennsylvania used more rye bread than did the rest of the people.

<sup>31</sup> Thoreau was one who complained about the increasing dependence of the farmer upon purchased foodstuffs. He wrote, in *Walden* (p. 70): "Yet so far are we from simplicity and independence that in Concord, fresh and sweet meal is rarely sold in the shops, and hominy and corn in a still coarser form are hardly used by any. For the most part the farmer gives to his cattle and hogs the grain of his own producing, and buys flour, which is at least no more wholesome, at a greater cost, at the store."

<sup>32</sup> See Richard H. Shryock, "Sylvester Graham and the Health Reform Movement, 1830-1870," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, XVIII (1931), 172-83.

Cereals could be consumed in as many ways as the housewife knew how to prepare them. Bread,<sup>33</sup> of course, was the chief use; griddlecakes (including buckwheat cakes) seem to have been a favorite breakfast dish; hot breads, especially in the South, were used much more than today. Mrs. Putnam's cook-book gives receipts for all sorts of breads (bread, biscuit, griddlecakes and buckwheat cakes, graham bread, corn bread, corn-cakes, crumpets, flannelcakes, muffins, rice cakes, rye cakes, and drop cakes, waffles, etc.), pastry (pies, tarts, cheesecakes, puffs, and other delicacies), puddings (some sixty-five different kinds, besides custards, meringues, whips, blancmange, and charlotte russe), and cakes (including also gingerbread, macaroons, and doughnuts).<sup>34</sup>

Besides, there were crackers, the product of the commercial bakeries. Philadelphia, for instance, had in 1858 nine cracker bakeries, with an annual output of about 120,000 eighty-pound barrels of crackers;<sup>35</sup> and in New York State, in 1865, the reporting bakeries produced 2,304,962 pounds and 10,085 barrels of crackers, besides some included in other items.<sup>36</sup> The cracker barrel seems already to have become a grocery-store fixture.

The well-to-do had a large choice of garden vegetables in the city markets; and gentlemen-farmers and those with country estates could produce still others for themselves. Because vegetable gardens required little time to become productive, the Northwest was nearly as well supplied with vegetables as the East. Nevertheless, I have the impression that many who might have had (in season) plenty of fresh vegetables from their own garden were not sufficiently interested to take the trouble.

<sup>33</sup> Jules Remy and Julius Brenchley (*A Journey to Great-Salt-Lake City* [London: W. Jeffs, 1861], I, 78 n.) speak of the use of saleratus (baking soda) instead of yeast in baking bread, all over the United States. I have seen nothing to substantiate this, and I suspect they were misinformed.

<sup>34</sup> "I afterward ate of hominy . . . , squash, and mush. I tried slap-jack, flap-jack, rye-cake, ris-cake (*ris*, the participle of the verb active 'to rise'), cup-cake, johnny-cake, and doughnuts" (Gratton, I, 62, the phrase in parentheses being a footnote in the original).

<sup>35</sup> Freedley, *Philadelphia* (1858 ed.), p. 267.

<sup>36</sup> *Census of the State of New York for 1865*, p. 484.



The working classes were everywhere almost wholly dependent on a few common staples. Of these, Irish potatoes were the most used, and there was some consumption of sweet potatoes, though nothing like that of the South. Rice was little used in the North. Corn was prepared for the table in various ways, hominy being particularly common on the farms. Green corn, peas, beans, onions, and cabbage were much used. Tomatoes, now no longer regarded as poisonous, were coming into popular consumption, and other vegetables to be seen on the table from time to time included eggplants and oyster plants (salsify). There was almost no use of green, leafy vegetables and very little even of root crops, in spite of their keeping qualities. (Reports indicate a small acreage of root crops, and most of those grown were fed to stock.)

Judged by present standards the fruit consumption of the country before the Civil War was even less imposing than that of vegetables:

Up to 1867, the foreign fruit growers and shippers saw no cloud on the horizon of the American market. The lemon of Sicily and the sweet Messina orange competed only with the apple for Yankee favor. Grapes, raisins, currants, prunes, every European fruit—green, dried, or preserved—found in the United States a market that was never glutted except by itself. Bananas and pineapples from the West Indies, Cuba, and Central America, cocoanuts and tropical fruits of every description, came, but in limited quantities, and an auction house that could do a business of a million a year would have been considered an impossibility. . . . Prior to the Civil War and for several years afterward the small fruits of New York, New Jersey, Long Island, and Delaware were the only competitors of the foreign fruit. Occasionally a sloop loaded with water melons would roll up from one of the Southern ports, or a few crates of the same fruit come by rail, but there was not systematized trade as there is to-day. Peaches were to be had in season, but if the much-bewailed Delaware crop really did fail, the market and prices both appreciated it, and California was not just behind waiting to come to the rescue as she is to-day.<sup>37</sup>

It was not until much later that railway facilities permitted rapid enough transportation from California to the East to

<sup>37</sup> John W. Nix, "The Fruit Trade," *One Hundred Years of American Commerce*, II, 603. "Pineapples, bananas, and oranges, are the cheapest fruits in the market" (*Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, June 21, 1856 [II, 22]). "For sale.—Bananas.—Several bunches of Fine Bananas. Apply this morning to Samuel McCarter, at the bar of the steamer Jessie K. Bell" (advertisement in *Cincinnati Daily Commercial*, May 16, 1860).

make that state an important source of supply. In the larger cities only the well-to-do could afford much fruit, and their consumption would seem small compared with that of the office worker and skilled laborer of today. Apples were the most commonly available of the fruits; most farmers had at least a small orchard, and more attention was being paid to the eating qualities of the apples grown. Peaches seemed cheap and plentiful to European visitors, but not until developments in canning and in transportation made regional specialization profitable did production become really great. Plums were fairly common in season, pears in the densely populated states, and among the smaller fruits, grapes and cranberries. The orchards of the Old Northwest were beginning to bear, and the fruit-growing of southern Michigan was already assuming commercial significance. But for the most part the newer parts of the country were dependent on wild fruit and berries and a few easily grown berries and small fruits.

Commercially canned fruits and vegetables had not yet become a part of popular consumption outside the big cities; to what extent they were used there is not so certain. They had ceased to be rarities; but it is altogether probable that they were for the most part still regarded as a novelty or a "treat." The amount of home "canning" and preserving is more uncertain still. Processes were complicated and results unpredictable, and it is unlikely that much of what we think of as canning was done.<sup>38</sup> Few vegetables other than tomatoes were canned. The root vegetables and potatoes and cabbages were easily kept in the root cellar or by "burying" them. There was no problem in keeping corn, and batches of hominy could be made from it as desired. A good deal of cabbage was converted into sauerkraut, some tomatoes were cooked, and other vegetables, including pumpkin and even, I think, tomatoes, sometimes dried. What was the most common method of preserving fruit I am far from

<sup>38</sup> The editor of the *Country Gentlemen*, recommending the use of self-sealing cans for asparagus, sweet corn, peas, and other vegetables, observed in 1855 that the use of preserves was declining, that of fresh fruit hermetically sealed taking their place (Cummings, p. 85).

sure. On the Frontier, and probably on farms in all parts of the country, there was a good deal of drying of such fruits as apples, pears, grapes, and perhaps others (though apples were more commonly kept in barrels in the cellar). But a good deal of fruit, too, was put up in heavy sugar.<sup>39</sup> Thrifty housewives, especially on the farms, undoubtedly did much of this sort of preserving to salvage fruit which would otherwise go to waste and to provide some variety throughout the seasons when fresh fruit could not be obtained. Much of the canned and dried fruits, as well as fresh apples, probably went into fruit pies, a much more common dessert here than abroad.<sup>40</sup> Apple butter and other fruit butters seem also to have been much liked.

*Food consumption in the South.*—Nowhere was there greater contrast between the diet of the rich and that of the poor than in the South. The slaves and the poor whites had scarcely a sufficiency of the plainest possible food; the wealthy planters lived in comparative abundance. Generalization about the planters' diet is not easy. Many of the planters, some of them occupying social positions of the highest respectability, lived on very plain fare; and such an aura of romance now surrounds the antebellum plantation that one is not always sure what is fact and what is fancy.<sup>41</sup> To the slaves, the planters sometimes seemed to live in a luxury which strained the vocabulary:

The close-fisted stinginess that fed the poor slave on coarse corn-meal and tainted meat . . . wholly vanishes on approaching the sacred precincts of the great house, the home of the Lloyds. There the scriptural phrase finds an exact illustration; the highly favored inmates of this mansion are literally arrayed "in purple and fine linen," and fare sumptuously every day! The table groans under the heavy and blood-bought luxuries gathered with pains-taking care, at home and abroad. Fields, forests, rivers and seas, are made tributary

<sup>39</sup> A limiting factor in home canning was sugar, which the housewife had to clarify before using, unless she used sugar which was worth more than the fruit.

<sup>40</sup> J. D. Burns (p. 8) and Tallack (p. 35), among others, commented on the frequency with which fruit pies appeared on the table in the United States. Pumpkin and squash pies were also common dessert dishes. Pie was particularly common in New England. Ralph Waldo Emerson, it is said, always had pie for breakfast (James Ford Rhodes, *History of the United States from the Compromise of 1850* [New York: Macmillan Co., 1906], III, 70, citing Oliver Wendell Holmes, *Emerson*, pp. 269, 362).

<sup>41</sup> For a well-considered evaluation of the plantation tradition see Francis Pendleton Gaines, *The Southern Plantation* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1925).

here. Immense wealth, and its lavish expenditure, fill the great house with all that can please the eye, or tempt the taste. Here, appetite, not food, is the great desideratum. Fish, flesh, and fowl, are here in profusion. Chickens, of all breeds, ducks, of all kinds, wild and tame, the common, and the huge Muscovite; Guinea fowls, turkeys, geese, and pea fowls, are in their several pens, fat and fattening for the destined vortex. The graceful swan, the mongrels, the black-necked wild goose; partridges, quails, pheasants and pigeons; choice water fowl, with all their strange varieties, are caught in this huge family net. Beef, veal, mutton and venison, of the most select kinds and quality, roll bounteously to this grand consumer. The teeming riches of the Chesapeake bay, its rock, perch, drums, crocus, trout, oyster, crab, and terrapin, are drawn hither to adorn the glittering table of the great house. The dairy, too, probably the finest on the Eastern Shore of Maryland—supplied by cattle of the best English stock, imported for the purpose, pours its rich donations of fragrant cheese, golden butter, and delicious cream, to heighten the attractions of the gorgeous, unending round of feasting. Nor are the fruits of the earth forgotten or neglected. The fertile garden, many acres in size, constituting a separate establishment, distinct from the common farm—with its scientific gardener, imported from Scotland, . . . was not behind, either in the abundance or in the delicacy of its contributions to the same full board. The tender asparagus, the succulent celery, and the delicate cauliflower; egg plants, beets, lettuce, parsnips, peas, and French beans, early and late; radishes, cantelopes, melons of all kinds; the fruits and flowers of all climes and of all descriptions, from the hardy apple of the north, to the lemon and orange of the south, cultivated at this point. Baltimore gathered figs, raisins, almonds and juice grapes from Spain. Wine and brandies from France, teas of various flavor, from China; the rich, aromatic coffee from Java, all conspired to swell the tide of high life, where price and indolence rolled and lounged in magnificence and satiety.<sup>42</sup>

That not all planters, and not even all eastern planters, lived luxuriously is shown by Olmsted's frequent comments on southern meals—and Olmsted was willing to praise southern fare when it could be praised. On a plantation eleven miles from Raleigh his lunch consisted of salt pork and pickled beets, various other kinds of "swine's flesh," and two or three kinds of

<sup>42</sup> Frederick Douglass, *My Bondage and Freedom* (New York: Miller, Orton & Mulligan, 1855), pp. 107-9. Phillips' account (*American Negro Slavery*, pp. 311-12) is hardly less fulsome; cf. also the accounts in A. De Puy Van Buren, *Fortings of a Year's Sojourn in the South* (Battle Creek, Mich.: *Battle Creek Review and Herald*, 1859), p. 46; Smedes, pp. 45-47; Edmund Kirke [James Roberts Gilmore], *Among the Pines* (New York: G. P. Putnam, 1862), p. 113; D. W. Mitchell, *Ten Years in the United States* (London: Smith, Elder & Co., 1862), p. 23; Catherine Cooper Hopley, *Life in the South* (London: Chapman & Hall, 1863), I, 83; Minnie Clare Boyd, *Alabama in the Fifties* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1931), pp. 112-13; Olmsted, *Seaboard Slave States*, pp. 80, 92, 327.

corn. In northern Alabama the planters had bacon, corn bread, and coffee at every meal. In Louisiana and Texas the usual fare of the planters, few of them very prosperous, consisted almost universally of salt pork, corn bread, and boiled sweet potatoes, and occasionally fresh pork. When, in a German community in Texas, Olmsted was served meat which was neither pork nor fried, he considered it worthy of special comment.<sup>43</sup> C. G. Parsons, when he called upon the governor of Georgia in 1852, found him dining on corn bread and bacon, dry ship bread, corned beef, and the upper part of a pig's head.<sup>44</sup>

There was little variety in the fare of the common people:

Salt bacon and "greens," with corn bread and thin coffee, composed the common fare, though milk and butter relieved the monotonous fare for the farmers. "Hog-killing time" was always a happy season, for fresh meats were then abundant. Only in the larger towns did the people have fresh meats throughout the year. An explanation of the enthusiasm of *ante-bellum* people for political speaking is found in the fact that barbecues either preceded or followed the oratory; and to a man who had lived for months on fat bacon and corn bread a fresh roast pig was a delight which would enable him to endure long hours of poor speaking.<sup>45</sup>

John G. Van Deusen finds that corn bread and bacon, a moderate amount of garden vegetables, and occasional fresh meat constituted the diet of the great body of southern people.<sup>46</sup> Miss Boyd describes the diet of the less well-to-do of Alabama as being bacon and greens, corn bread, poor butter, blue and watery milk, snap beans, occasionally a few other garden vegetables, poor beef, and sometimes a bony chicken.<sup>47</sup> Parsons' impression of the Georgians was that they lived almost entirely on corn bread and bacon.<sup>48</sup> A visitor to a poor-white home in Georgia

<sup>43</sup> *Seaboard Slave States*, p. 322; *A Journey in the Back Country* (London: Sampson Low, Son & Co., 1860), p. 61; *Texas Journey*, pp. 60-61, 144, and *passim*.

<sup>44</sup> *Inside View of Slavery* (Boston: John P. Jewett & Co., 1855), p. 115.

<sup>45</sup> William E. Dodd, *Expansion and Conflict* (2d ed.; Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1919), pp. 208-9. It is perhaps well to point out that "bacon" is likely to mean any kind of salted pork and that "greens" had a rather wider meaning in 1860, and especially in the South, than it has today.

<sup>46</sup> *Economic Bases of Disunion in South Carolina* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1928), p. 269.

<sup>47</sup> P. 115.

<sup>48</sup> P. 113.

was served coffee without sugar, fried bacon, and corn bread mixed with water only; there were no vegetables, butter, or other foods.<sup>49</sup>

At the lowest level were the slaves, with their weekly allowance of salt pork and corn meal and sometimes a few vegetables.

Beef and veal, mutton and lamb, were not often to be found on southern tables, possibly because the pastures were poor and the climate too warm. The wealthier planters probably had them occasionally, other planters less often, and the common people only rarely.<sup>50</sup> Poultry, which required little extra expense on the plantation or farm and which could be cooked in enough different ways to give a semblance of variety, was a standard part of the southern diet. All the large plantations had chickens and ducks, many of them geese and turkeys; probably most of the smaller farms, too, had at least chickens, although there is hardly enough information to make generalization safe.<sup>51</sup> Throughout the South wild game was plentiful, and planters could dine on venison, quail, and occasionally possum, wild turkey, or bear.<sup>52</sup>

There were fish in great plenty along southern coasts and in the rivers, and most of the southern newspapers advertised fish

<sup>49</sup> Burke, p. 209.

<sup>50</sup> Phillips, pp. 311-12; Mitchell, pp. 23, 37; Parsons, pp. 113-15; Van Buren, p. 46; Gilmore, pp. 15, 113, and *passim*; and Olmsted's volumes; William E. Dodd, *The Cotton Kingdom* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1921), pp. 93-94, and *Expansion and Conflict*, pp. 208-9; Van Deusen, p. 269; Boyd, pp. 112-15; Hopley, I, 83; Smedes, p. 47.

Olmsted gives the following prices: at Caldwell, Texas: beef, 2 cents alb.; pork, 5 cents; corn-fed pork, 6 cents (*Texas Journey*, p. 107); Austin: fresh beef, 3½ cents; pork, 6 cents; bacon, 18 cents; hams, 20-25 cents (p. 115); New Braunfels: fresh beef, 3 cents; pork, 7 cents; bacon, 15 cents; sugar-cured hams, 20 cents; fowls, 20 cents each; turkeys, 50 cents; wild turkeys, 25 cents; ducks, 20 cents; whole deer, \$1.00; quarter-deer, 20 cents; mutton, 7 cents (p. 179).

<sup>51</sup> Smedes, p. 47; Dodd, *Cotton Kingdom*, pp. 93-94; Gilmore, p. 113; Olmsted, *Seaboard Slave States*, pp. 80 and 92, and *Journey through Back Country*, p. 161. Eggs sold at 6-8 cents a dozen wholesale in Maysville, Kentucky, during 1858 (price quotations in various issues of the *Tri-Weekly Maysville Eagle*) and were 25 cents in Austin when Olmsted was there (*Texas Journey*, p. 115).

<sup>52</sup> See William Elliott, *Carolina Sports by Land and Water* (New York: Derby & Jackson, 1859), and similar books on hunting and fishing; see also such accounts of southern life as James Battle Avirett, *The Old Plantation* (New York: F. Tennyson Neely Co., [1901]), pp. 23, 76; Gilmore, p. 113; Smedes, p. 47; Van Buren, p. 46; Olmsted, *Texas Journey*, p. 179.

—herring, whitefish, cod, salmon, halibut, mackerel, and others—and canned seafood. But the impression left by the many accounts of southern life is that fish was not an important part of southern diet—presumably most of the whites were either too busy or too indifferent to do much fishing. Off the eastern coast there were terrapin; and in the Gulf there were oysters in abundance. Other southern cities were supplied from Baltimore or from New Orleans or Mobile.

Pork was the meat most commonly to be found in the North and in the West, but in the South it seemed almost to be the only meat. From planter to slave, pork and corn, in their various forms, were the staples of diet.<sup>53</sup> Pork could be served fresh, smoked, pickled, or salted; it could be made into sausage; barbecued it was an event.<sup>54</sup> And the importance of lard, when frying was the common way of cooking (as I think it was) and there were no vegetable shortenings, cannot be exaggerated. Hogs required little care; they could be fed from what would otherwise be thrown away or even left to forage for themselves. Emily P. Burke commented that bacon, not bread, seemed to be the staff of life; boiled or fried, it was on the table three times daily.<sup>55</sup> From a few up to a couple of hundred hogs might be killed at hog-killing time. The bacon and hams would be cured, shoulders and sides likewise preserved, and the lard saved. On the plantations the spareribs, backbone, jowl and feet, souse, liver, and chitterlings were immediately consumed by plantation hands, and crackling-bread made from the leftovers after trying the lard.<sup>56</sup>

Most of the planters were able to supply their own need for butter, milk, and eggs,<sup>57</sup> although there was much variation

<sup>53</sup> This is emphasized in such contemporary accounts as those of Smedes, Van Buren, Olmsted, Hopley, Mitchell, Gilmore, Parsons, and Burke; and by such recent historians as Dodd, Phillips, Boyd, and Van Deusen.

<sup>54</sup> See p. 350 below.

<sup>55</sup> P. 223.

<sup>56</sup> Phillips, pp. 312–13; Wendell H. Stephenson, "A Quarter-Century of a Mississippi Plantation: Eli J. Capell of 'Pleasant Hill,'" *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, XXIII (1936), 355–74; Burke, p. 223; Smedes, p. 47.

<sup>57</sup> Cf. George M. Rommel, "The Animal Industry of the South," *The South in the Building of the Nation*, V, 252; Hopley, I, 83; Smedes, p. 45.

among planters and regions. Olmsted spent a few days at a farm in Maryland where there was a large dairy herd kept exclusively to supply milk for sale in Washington; and his griddle-cakes at a Virginia meal were soaked in butter; but at the best hotel in Norfolk he found the butter tainted and no milk obtainable.<sup>58</sup> A South Carolina planter (who was using his cows as draft animals) explained to Gilmore that his cattle were no good as milkers and that he and his family used goat's milk for coffee; they had imported their butter from the North for ten years.<sup>59</sup> Olmsted found the butter in the highlands of northern Alabama good, although there was no cheese.<sup>60</sup> Parsons reported that the Georgia crackers had no milk cows,<sup>61</sup> and Van Buren, in Mississippi, found less butter used than in the North.<sup>62</sup> Olmsted called the butter served him in a Louisiana cabin "lard-like," but they did have milk.<sup>63</sup> At none of the seven stores and two inns at Crockett, Texas, could he find butter, and at Austin and San Antonio the prices of milk, butter, and eggs put them out of reach of all but the well-to-do;<sup>64</sup> at a German home in New Braunfels he did have good butter.<sup>65</sup> In the big cities, at least, there was some use of ice cream.

Corn was the all-important southern cereal. Loaves of wheat bread were seldom seen, perhaps because hot breads were preferred. The well-to-do were likely to have a variety of breads, especially for breakfast. Mitchell gave as a typical southern breakfast, coffee, hot rolls, batter bread, corncake, milk, eggs, bacon, and wheat bread.<sup>66</sup> Olmsted had for breakfast at a Virginia home fried fowl, fried bacon and eggs, cold ham, preserved

<sup>58</sup> *Seaboard Slave States*, pp. 12, 80, and 306.

<sup>59</sup> Gilmore, p. 168.

<sup>60</sup> *Back Country*, p. 224.

<sup>62</sup> P. 46.

<sup>61</sup> P. 114.

<sup>63</sup> *Texas Journey*, p. 49.

<sup>64</sup> At Austin, milk retailed at 15-20 cents a quart, butter at from 40 to 50 cents a pound, eggs 25 cents a dozen (*Texas Journey*, p. 115); specific prices are not given for San Antonio (p. 157). The Crockett episode is recounted on p. 84. These prices may be compared with the prices in Maysville in 1858—cheese, 10-12½ cents a pound, butter, 10-20 cents (*Tri-Weekly Maysville Eagle*).

<sup>65</sup> *Texas Journey*, p. 144.

<sup>66</sup> P. 23.



peaches and quinces, and grapes, hot wheaten biscuits, hot shortcake, hot corncake, hot griddlecakes soaked in butter, coffee, and sweet and sour milk.<sup>67</sup> As one proceeded down the income scale, the variety dropped out; and the common people rarely, if ever, had bread other than ordinary corn bread.<sup>68</sup> Olmsted, in his journey across Texas, encountered wheat bread only twice.<sup>69</sup>

Although there seem to have been a good many people in the South—people such as the Georgia crackers, for instance—whose whole diet consisted of corn bread and bacon,<sup>70</sup> most of the people were able to add to it a moderate amount of garden vegetables, or “greens.”<sup>71</sup> Of these vegetables the most common were corn in its various forms (hominy and grits, and roasting ears), sweet potatoes, Irish potatoes when new, cabbages, peas, and beans. Okra was used more than in the North, though even in the South it was not consumed in very large amounts. As elsewhere, turnips and other root crops were little used except for feeding stock. According to Miss Boyd, the Alabamans might have, in their kitchen gardens, peas, greens, collards, beans, and cabbages; and the more progressive grew asparagus, beets, kale, broccoli, Brussels sprouts, carrots, cauliflower, celery, eggplant, lettuce, onions, peppers, radishes, spinach, squash, and tomatoes. Other needed foods they could buy at the stores.<sup>72</sup> But the less well-to-do, she adds, had for vegetables only greens, snap beans, and occasionally a few garden vegetables.<sup>73</sup> Louisiana planters grew, for themselves and their families, such garden products as cabbages and turnips.<sup>74</sup>

<sup>67</sup> *Seaboard Slave States*, p. 80.

<sup>68</sup> Cf. Burke, Hopley, Gilmore, Olmsted, Parsons, Van Buren; or, among recent writers, Boyd, Dodd, Phillips, Van Deussen.

<sup>69</sup> *Texas Journey*, p. 62. At Crockett and at New Braunfels he found crackers selling for 20 cents a pound, the New York price being 6 cents (pp. 84 and 179).

<sup>70</sup> Burke, p. 209; Parsons, p. 113. But even the sand-hillers usually raised corn and vegetables for themselves (Burke, p. 208).

<sup>71</sup> Van Deussen, p. 269; Dodd, *Expansion and Conflict*, p. 208; cf. also Phillips, Gilmore, Olmsted, Douglass, Hopley, Boyd.

<sup>72</sup> Pp. 112-13.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 115.

<sup>74</sup> Northup, p. 174.

Amelia Murray wrote that fruit was scarcer and dearer in Virginia and Carolina than in England,<sup>75</sup> and it does seem to be true that only the well-to-do in the South can have had much fruit. There were few commercial orchards, though Negroes could sometimes gather wild fruit, and there were some apples and peaches for home consumption. Fresh oranges and lemons and fresh and preserved pineapple were advertised in the papers of southern cities, and a considerable amount of fruit was preserved on the plantations. That fruits and vegetables were really abundant in the South is certainly untrue; but the picture of a diet limited to salt pork and corncakes probably errs as much in the other direction.

Sweetenings in the South varied all the way from the loaf, crushed, and powdered sugars which the city stores imported to no sweetening at all. Except for the well-to-do, there was no use of refined sugar.<sup>76</sup> Molasses was much more used than in the North, especially in the sugar regions, and the southern states both produced and consumed more honey than did the northern states.<sup>77</sup>

*The food of the slaves.*—The slaves on some plantations fared much better than those on others:

Some planters raised enough corn and made enough pork to feed the negroes throughout the year, while others purchased all or nearly all the food supplies. . . .

Merely from a business standpoint it was to the interest of the planter to furnish sufficient food and clothing to his slave to keep him in working order, and suffering for want of food was no doubt a thing of seldom occurrence. This food, however, was of a coarse kind, and though healthy, lacked variety. Olmsted considered it inferior to that furnished prison convicts at the North. From four to six (sometimes as high as ten) quarts of corn meal and a quart of molasses, were usually dealt out to the negroes each week. To this were sometimes added vegetables in their season and usually half a pound of

<sup>75</sup> Hon. Amelia M. Murray, *Letters from the United States, Cuba, and Canada* (New York: G. P. Putnam & Co., 1856), p. 202.

<sup>76</sup> Olmsted found in one Texas town that no refined sugar could be purchased at any price (*Texas Journey*, p. 84). In the Maysville market, throughout 1858, sugar was regularly quoted at 7½–8½ cents a pound.

<sup>77</sup> Olmsted wrote that in northern Alabama the usual sweetening was molasses, with honey frequently found (*Back Country*, p. 162). The Eighth Census showed a much larger production of honey in the South than in the North (*Agriculture*, pp. 184–87).

bacon for every able bodied negro. Louisiana was the only state which required by the law the furnishing of meat to slaves, and even there it does not seem always to have been observed, although it was generally practiced throughout the South. On most of the plantations the negroes were allowed to cultivate "truck patches," and to raise poultry and sometimes a pig. What produce thus raised they did not themselves consume, they sold, and invested the returns in tobacco, whiskey, and Sunday finery.

On some plantations, however, the slaves were not allowed to cultivate these "patches," for it tempted them to reserve for cultivating their gardens in the evening the strength which should have been expended in the cotton field.<sup>78</sup>

The slaves raised pigs and chickens, and had gardens in which they grew sweet potatoes for themselves and, in the upper South, tobacco plants in the fence corners about the "quarters." Every week the master allowed each grown person four pounds of meat, a peck of meal, and a quart of molasses, with something over for the little ones. The rest the slave was expected to find for himself—the Sunday chicken, the "greens" from the garden, and the potatoes from the cache in which they were stored away from the cold. The older slaves were allowed to keep dogs and to hunt coons and 'possums at night and, now and then, squirrels and rabbits at day [from William E. Dodd, "The Cotton Kingdom," Volume 27, *The Chronicles of America*, copyright Yale University Press].<sup>79</sup>

The leading historian of southern agriculture, Lewis C. Gray, puts the standard ration at from 1 to 1½ pecks of meal and 3½ pounds of bacon a week for adults, and about half that for children (with considerable uniformity, especially in the cotton regions). Vegetables were frequently allowed in season, from the slaves' own gardens or from that of the plantation. Even luxuries—as molasses, fish, buttermilk, tobacco, rum, and coffee—were occasionally allotted. In the coastal region of South Caro-

<sup>78</sup> M. G. Hammond, *The Cotton Industry* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1897), pp. 90-92. The degree to which the plantations attained—or aspired to—self-sufficiency is still uncertain. Flanders (pp. 212 ff.) thinks that the self-sufficiency of the plantations, especially the smaller ones, has been underestimated, because too much attention has been paid travelers' accounts. Andrew M. Soule ("Vegetables, Fruits and Nursery Products, and Truck Farming in the South," in *The South in the Building of the Nation*, Vol. V; *Economic History, 1607-1865* [Richmond: Southern Historical Pub. Soc., 1909], 238) writes that the concentration on staples made the importation of a good many foods, even potatoes, necessary. Robert Russell, who studied American agriculture and resources in 1854-55, wrote that, despite the desire of the planters for self-sufficiency, almost all the bacon was imported from the North [*North America: Its Agriculture and Climate* (Edinburgh: Adam and Charles Black, 1857), p. 265]; see also Thompson and Jones, pp. 607 ff.

<sup>79</sup> P. 74.

lina it was not generally customary to allow meat, as animal husbandry was not prevalent; and for the most part the diet consisted of sweet potatoes, grits or hominy, and broken rice.<sup>80</sup> Olmsted gives the Louisiana minimum legal requirement as 4 pounds of meat a week, a barrel of corn (i.e., a flour barrel of ears of corn), and salt. In North Carolina the prescribed allowance was 1 quart of corn a day, with no requirement for meat. No other state had any specific requirement.<sup>81</sup>

*Food on the Frontier.*—Among the states of the "Old Northwest" there were regions which were well served by transportation and which maintained close contact with the states farther east. In such regions the food-consumption habits were little different from those of the East: the cities drew upon the coun-

<sup>80</sup> Lewis Cecil Gray, *History of Agriculture in the Southern United States to 1860* (Washington: Carnegie Institution, 1923), I, 563-64.

<sup>81</sup> *Seaboard Slave States*, p. 700. There is so much material dealing with the slaves' food, and it is so easily available, that it seems unnecessary to make any extended comment here; see, e.g., the following:

Reports by the planters themselves: DeBow, *Industrial Resources*, II, 33, 333-36; *DeBow's Review*, XXIV (1858), 325; [Ebenezer Starnes], *The Slaveholder Abroad* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott & Co., 1860), pp. 493 ff.

Accounts written by former slaves: Levi J. Coppin, *Unwritten History* (Philadelphia: A.M.E. Book Concern, 1900), pp. 40-41; Douglass, pp. 188-90; Northup, pp. 169-70, 200-201; Booker T. Washington, *Up from Slavery* (New York: Doubleday Page & Co., 1902), pp. 3-4 and 9.

Memoirs of plantation life: Avirett, pp. 58 and *passim*; Burke, pp. 112-13, 225-26; R. Q. Mallard, *Plantation Life before Emancipation* (Richmond: Whittet & Shepperson, 1892), p. 31; Smedes, p. 35.

Books by contemporary travelers in the South: Pulszky, II, 105; Olmsted, *Seaboard Slave States*, pp. 108-10, 348-49, 431-32, 439, 660, 693, and *Back Country*, pp. 42, 50-51, 74-76, 201; Parsons, pp. 151-54; Robert Russell, p. 266; William Howard Russell, *My Diary North and South* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1863), p. 266.

Books and articles by recent historians: James Curtis Ballagh, *A History of Slavery in Virginia* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1902), pp. 102-3, 108; John Spencer Bassett, *Slavery in the State of North Carolina* ("Johns Hopkins University Studies in Historical and Political Science," Ser. XVII, Nos. 7-8 [Baltimore, 1899]), pp. 85-87; Flanders, pp. 157-59; Guion Griffis Johnson, *Ante-bellum North Carolina*, pp. 522-23, and *A Social History of the Sea Islands* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1930), pp. 85-87; Ivan E. McDougale, *Slavery in Kentucky, 1792-1865* (reprinted from *Journal of Negro History*, Vol. III, No. 3 [1918]), p. 73; V. Alton Moody, *Slavery on Louisiana Sugar Plantations* (reprinted from *Louisiana Historical Quarterly*, April, 1924), pp. 64-65, 74-78; Caleb Perry Patterson, *The Negro in Tennessee, 1790-1865* (Bull. 2205) (Austin: University of Texas, 1922), pp. 25-26, 67-68; Phillips, pp. 265-66; Rosser, Howard Taylor, *Slave-holding in North Carolina: An Economic View* ("James Sprunt Historical Publications," Vol. XVIII, Nos. 1-2 [Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1926]), pp. 83-84, 89-91.

tryside, they had their markets for meat and produce, and they had access to the products of other regions and other countries; even the rural areas could have as much variety in their food-stuffs as could the rural areas of the East. These favored regions shaded off imperceptibly into other parts of the same states, which were as much frontier as Nebraska or Oregon. Erastus F. Beadle, who was traveling through the West early in 1857, noted in his diary for March 12 that in the region between Michigan City and Indianapolis, where the dwellings were the "poorest kind of logg huts," the food was only corn and pork, varied with "shakes."<sup>82</sup> In 1859, when Anna Howard Shaw was a child, her family migrated to Michigan. They had brought with them coffee, pork, and flour enough for several weeks, which they could cook over a mud-and-stone fireplace. Water had to be brought from a distant creek. They could gather wild fruit—gooseberries, raspberries, and plums—they could fish, and they raised a little green corn and potatoes; but for the first winter they lived largely on corn meal, which they obtained from the nearest mill, twenty miles away. Another family lived entirely on coarse yellow turnips, changing to leeks in the spring.<sup>83</sup>

In rural Illinois corn bread and salted or smoked pork were the staples, varied in the later fifties by wheat bread and buckwheat cakes. Corn mush and milk was a common dish. For fresh meat, a hog or a beef killed in the fall would be divided among the families in the community. Apples and peaches were dried, as were pumpkins, and there were pickles and preserves of various sorts.<sup>84</sup> Toward 1860 there was fresh meat more frequently on the tables of the prosperous.<sup>85</sup> Anthony Trollope, who probably didn't see much of the back country of the North-

<sup>82</sup> *To Nebraska in '57* (New York: Public Library, 1923), p. 6. What sort of food he meant by "shakes" I have been unable to discover.

<sup>83</sup> Anna Howard Shaw, *The Story of a Pioneer* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1915), pp. 30-32.

<sup>84</sup> Charles B. Johnson, *Illinois in the Fifties* (Champaign, Ill.: Flanigan-Pearson Co., 1918), pp. 15-20.

<sup>85</sup> Albert J. Beveridge, *Abraham Lincoln, 1809-1858* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1928), II, 198.

west, commented that even the laboring Irish in Michigan, Wisconsin, Minnesota, Iowa, Illinois, and other western states ate meat seven days a week.<sup>86</sup> Orchards took time to get started, and in the newer regions the pioneers had to depend upon wild fruits and berries for that part of their diet; they could, and some did, have gardens with all sorts of vegetables. In some parts of the Northwest there were large amounts of maple sugar produced, and in others farmers raised sorghum; molasses and cane sugar had to be imported and were expensive.

West of the Mississippi bacon and corn bread were to an even greater degree the mainstay of the popular diet, supplemented occasionally by beef and eggs and by dried peaches and apples. Some of the more enterprising had gardens, there were a few wild fruits and berries and some game—venison, prairie fowl, wild turkey, rabbits, squirrels.<sup>87</sup>

Utah had been settled long enough for different levels in consumption to appear. In the best homes there were beef, mutton, pork, bacon, smoked and dried fish, cheese, and butter; cabbages, corn, onions, squashes, pumpkins, beans, peas, potatoes, watermelons, cantaloupes; grapes, strawberries, blackberries, and gooseberries. People had their own gardens in which they raised garden truck, they dried their own apples, and they put up berry preserves. In the outlying districts smoked and salted meat and potatoes were at times the only foods, supplemented in some places by fish, while in the newer communities the pioneers were living on corn bread, dried meat, and potatoes for the most part—they had johnnycake, corn dumplings, and corn-meal porridge. Dried pumpkins and baked squashes were delicacies. By the fifties wheat bread was fairly common, and there were homemade sausages, molasses, and honey.<sup>88</sup> Prices were low for

<sup>86</sup> *North America* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1862), p. 120.

<sup>87</sup> Everett Dick, *The Sod-House Frontier, 1854-1890* (New York: D. Appleton-Century Co., 1937), pp. 62-63; Samuel Bowles, *Across the Continent* (Springfield, Mass.: Samuel Bowles & Co., 1865), p. 21; Burton, p. 23; Sara T. L. Robinson, *Kansas: Its Interior and Exterior Life* (Boston: Crosby, Nichols & Co., 1856), p. 4. Samuel J. Crawford, *Kansas in the Sixties* (Chicago: A. C. McClurg & Co., 1911), pp. 8-9, John H. Gihon, *Geary and Kansas* (Philadelphia: Charles C. Rhodés, 1857), p. 14.

<sup>88</sup> Levi E. Young, *The Founding of Utah* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1923), pp. 241-44; see also Remy and Brenchley, I, 190, and II, 267-72; Horace Greeley, *An*

foods that could be produced locally, but the high freights made imported foodstuffs costly (see Appen. C, Table 32).

It was on the mining frontier that the diet was most severely limited. When Horace Greeley arrived in Denver in 1859, he found the staples of consumption were bread, bacon, beans, and coffee. Antelope was to be had occasionally, and some persons were eating boiled nettles.<sup>89</sup> In June, 1859, radishes, lettuce, onions, and peas, all locally produced, were on sale in Denver markets. There were gardens along the Platte River and on the creeks and more extensive farming on the Arkansas River and its branches, supplying wagonloads of garden truck to Denver and the camps. Most foods were still brought from the Missouri River region by ox trains (sometimes the oxen themselves were eaten, on arrival), but large quantities were coming in from New Mexico and Utah. By 1860 irrigated farming was an established occupation, especially along the Arkansas; and vegetables, corn, grain, and melons were being raised.<sup>90</sup>

In that year Denver had its milkman, its iceman, and its vendor of vegetables; and there were "in the groceries, rich yellow pumpkins, potatoes, beets; turnips, cucumbers, and melons." Turnips, beets, and lettuce were also being grown in a little valley near Breckenridge.<sup>91</sup> Fresh fruit was still almost unobtainable, except for wild berries, plums, and cherries, and imported apples sold for from 10 to 25 cents each, peaches up to \$1.00 each. Dried apples, some canned fruit, and vegetables were to be had, and butter, milk, and eggs were usually obtain-

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*Overland Journey from New York to San Francisco in the Summer of 1859* (New York: C. M. Saxton, Barker & Co., 1860), pp. 236-37; Hubert Howe Bancroft, *History of Utah* (San Francisco: History Co., 1889), p. 378.

<sup>89</sup> Fortunately for our knowledge of this period in Colorado history, we have the personal accounts of three well-known newspapermen—Horace Greeley, Henry Villard, and Albert J. Richardson—who were there and taking part. For the diet on Greeley's arrival see his *Recollections of a Busy Life* (New York: J. B. Ford & Co., 1868), p. 366, and also his *Overland Journey*, pp. 164-65. Villard (*The Past and Present of the Pike's Peak Gold Regions*, reprinted from 1860 ed. with Introduction and Notes by L. R. Hafen [Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1932], p. 26) also speaks of bacon, beans, coffee, and gritty bread made of Mexican flour as being the only food in the spring of 1859.

<sup>90</sup> Hafen, pp. 122-25.

<sup>91</sup> Richardson, pp. 297, 300, 310.

able at fair prices. Venison was 7 cents a pound, bear 30 cents, ducks 50 cents a pair.<sup>92</sup> In the camps the miners did their own cooking—flapjacks, beans, and coffee—and prices were higher—flour \$44 a barrel at first, bacon and sugar 50 cents a pound. But by 1860 there was fresh beef and game and even a few vegetables.<sup>93</sup>

What was true in Colorado was true in Nevada. The sudden increase in population and the sudden increase in the output of the precious metals, acting on a market which could not respond very rapidly, made for a restricted diet and high food prices. In Virginia City, in April, 1860, flour was selling for \$1.00 a pound; in July it had dropped to 20 cents. Until May or June brown sugar was 50 cents a pound, rice 45 cents, butter \$1.00. By October 27 the price of flour had fallen to 14 cents a pound.<sup>94</sup> In the Carson Valley, Capt. J. H. Simpson, a government explorer, found the cattle and hogs fat and sleek, the butter rich, and the wheat and barley doing well; but little corn or oats had been grown. There were a few peaches, but no apples or grapes. All the garden vegetables and strawberries, raspberries, and gooseberries were thriving. There were Irish potatoes, but no sweet potatoes.<sup>95</sup>

Washington and (except for a few permanent settlements) Oregon had been settled only by traders and trappers until the mining discoveries just before 1860; and the few miners who had come in lived under even more primitive conditions than those of Colorado and Nevada. Bread, bacon, beans, and coffee comprised almost their whole diet, and transportation costs made food prices high. Vegetables were in demand, for lack of them was known to cause scurvy, but not many were to be had. There were fish, but few had time to go fishing.<sup>96</sup> Throughout the

<sup>92</sup> Hafen, p. 151; see also Appen. C, Table 40.

<sup>93</sup> Hafen, p. 153; Villard, pp. 48, 79-80, 112-13.

<sup>94</sup> Charles Howard Shinn, *The Story of the Mine* (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1897), p. 74; see also Appen. C, Table 31.

<sup>95</sup> *Report of Explorations across the Great Basin of the Territory of Utah . . . in 1859* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1876), p. 92.

<sup>96</sup> George W. Fuller, *A History of the Pacific Northwest* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1931), p. 279.



West the diet of the traders and trappers, alone or at posts, was much the same—cured meat, game, beans, and coffee; rarely did they have even bread.

After the first flush of the mining fever had worn off in California, there was a powerful stimulus for the state to become self-supporting as far as food was concerned—the high cost of transportation and the length of time it required gave the local producer a “protected” market. Production of cereals and of dairy products increased much more rapidly during the fifties than did population.<sup>97</sup> In 1860 California packed all the meat needed for its own consumption, and the imports of eastern lard and butter decreased by half.<sup>98</sup> There had been herds of beef cattle in California for many years, and the numbers of swine and sheep were increasing. Chickens were rather plentiful, turkeys less so, and there was some game.<sup>99</sup> Greeley wrote that in 1859 California was still far from supplying her own wants when it came to dairy products. Good butter was 50 cents a pound in San Francisco and had a “white, insipid look.” Cheese, at 25 cents, was seldom seen.<sup>100</sup>

In San Francisco imported bananas, pineapples, and coconuts were to be had, and there was a plentiful supply of garden produce from the vicinity. Corn on the cob and succotash were among the favorite dishes.<sup>101</sup> Around Los Angeles there were wheat, corn, barley, oats, beans, peas and chick-peas, lentils, sugar cane, mulberries, sweet potatoes, potatoes, watermelons, muskmelons, vegetables of all sorts, fruit trees of various kinds, including pears, apples, cherries, apricots, peaches, almonds, walnuts, and oranges; and there were citrons, figs, lemons, and vineyards.<sup>102</sup> Eugene Bandel wrote, late in 1859, that melons,

<sup>97</sup> Robert Glass Cleland and Osgood Hardy, *March of Industry* (Los Angeles: Powell Pub. Co., 1929), pp. 41-49.

<sup>98</sup> *Hunt's Merchants' Magazine*, XLV (1861), 66.

<sup>99</sup> Harris Newmark, *Sixty Years in Southern California, 1853-1913* (New York: Knickerbocker Press, 1916), p. 124.

<sup>100</sup> *Overland Journey*, pp. 345-46.

<sup>101</sup> Sutherland, pp. 65, 175-76, 189.

<sup>102</sup> Remy and Brenchley, II, 477-78. Truck gardening had been introduced around Los Angeles in the early fifties (Newmark, p. 124). For an enthusiastic description of

peaches, figs, pears, grapes, and watermelons were on the market in Benecia, Los Angeles, and other cities in Southern California. There were no apples yet, but some were expected from Oregon.<sup>103</sup>

#### SUMMARY: THE DIET OF THE FIFTIES

*General characteristics.*—Before going on to other matters, it would perhaps be well to look at some of the broader phases of food consumption—too much attention to detail may leave one with no general impressions at all. I have given in Table 1 parts

TABLE 1\*  
CONSUMPTION OF FOODSTUFFS IN THE UNITED STATES AT  
SELECTED PERIODS  
(Pounds per Capita)

	1830-39	1850-59	1930-39
Meats.....	178.7	183.9	128.6
Lard.....	13.7	13.2	12.2
Butter.....		15.1	17.5
Wheat flour.....	170.0	205.0	158.0
Sugar.....	13.1	29.7	95.5

\* Source: Cummings, pp. 236-37. The original data are from various sources and for the earlier periods are to be regarded as approximate only. As Cummings points out, the data are not really for "consumption" but for "disappearance" of foodstuffs.

of a table compiled by Cummings. Whatever its deficiencies, it is sufficiently accurate to indicate a few trends in food consumption. One striking characteristic is the decline in meat consumption since the Civil War. Inclusion of data for the intervening decades would only confirm this, since the decade of the fifties was the peak for meat consumption. (In the only family budget I have seen for this period in which the allocation

fruitgrowing in California and its possibilities see Greeley, *Overland Journey*, pp. 329-30, 337, 339. Cleland and Hardy, however, write that horticulture was still undeveloped, because men had neither the capital nor the inclination to wait for orchards to bear, because of the difficulties of transporting stock, and because of the lack of experience under the new conditions.

<sup>103</sup> *Frontier Life in the Army*, ed. Ralph P. Bieber, trans. Olga Bandel and Richard Jente ("Southwestern Historical Ser.," Vol. II [Glendale, Calif.: Arthur H. Clark Co., 1932]), p. 289. For prices in Southern California see *ibid.*, pp. 302-15.

among the various food items is shown—the budget is given in full on p. 394 below—a third of all the money spent for food went for meat.) I am not sure that I know all, nor even the most important, reasons for this large consumption of meat. One reason certainly was the large amount of unoccupied land relative to the population, which made grazing, and therefore livestock, cheap. This could hardly account for the large consumption of pork and pork products;<sup>104</sup> but, even for these, cheap land and cheap feed were undoubtedly a factor. That meat was inexpensive meant that people could afford it; that they did use it in such quantities is at least partly to be explained by the fact that—apart from bread—there was little else to eat. With meat cheap and fruits and vegetables out of reach, it was natural that meat consumption should be large. It is also to be remembered that most of the population worked long hours at hard work and had corresponding appetites. Whatever the reasons, the decline in meat consumption is an obvious fact; the consumption of *fresh* meat has by no means declined so much and may possibly (I am by no means sure of this) not have declined at all.

Another trend which the table shows plainly is the decrease in the consumption of cereals in recent years, following an increase in the first part of the century (the peak consumption of wheat flour—226 pounds per capita—was reached in the decade 1870–79). This is easier to explain. In earlier times bread had been really the “staff of life” and was, in fact, almost the only food. Throughout western Europe one mark of the rising scale of living was the substitution of other foods for bread, and the same has been true in this country—and is still going on. The increase in flour consumption in the earlier period resulted from increasing productivity and a higher standard (“level”) of living; the more recent decrease has resulted from an increase in productivity so great as to make possible a complete change in dietary habits. What the table does not and cannot show is the change in the flour itself. Flour in the fifties was manufactured

<sup>104</sup> Miss Kyrk points out that these represent a larger proportion of fat meat, as compared with muscle, than do meats from other animals.

by quite different processes; not only was a greater proportion of whole meal used, but even the white flour probably had somewhat different characteristics from today's white flour.

Nearly four times as much sugar is consumed now as in the fifties, though it must be remembered that this increase in sugar consumption coincides with a decrease in the consumption of molasses, syrup and sorghum, and honey, which in the fifties were more common sweetenings than was sugar.

I have no figures for vegetable consumption, but it is significant that in the family budget already mentioned no vegetables but potatoes were included. Even though the figures are lacking, we need have no hesitation in saying that the consumption of both fruit and vegetables has increased enormously since the Civil War, and particularly in the present century. Not only has the amount increased, but there have been changes in kind as well—an increase in citrus fruits and in green and leafy vegetables. The low consumption in 1860 is partly attributable to "economic" factors, such as the lack of the necessary refrigeration and rapid transportation, the immaturity of the canning industry, and the low level of purchasing power resulting from the low average productivity. It is also attributable partly to the ignorance of the science of nutrition and of the protective properties of fresh fruits and vegetables. Still another reason was that the people just didn't care enough about these foods to be willing to take the trouble to have gardens of their own—or that, in those strenuous days, they lacked time and energy.

Figures are lacking also for milk consumption, except those I have already given. The family budget cited on the preceding pages allows for the consumption of only about a fifth of a pint a day for the whole family, according to Cummings' estimate, and certainly the urban milk consumption was very small. Again, we can explain this partly by the lack of refrigeration and rapid transportation, partly by the ignorance of the food value of milk, partly by low purchasing power.

The whole recent tendency toward the use of more highly refined foods, less quickly perishable, put up in more attractive form, but lacking some of the food values of the natural, un-

processed foods, is something which must be kept in mind. And, as Cummings points out, "modern standards of diet, strictly speaking . . . , are not applicable to conditions of life a century ago. People benefited from a vigorous life with plenty of sunshine and fresh air, and so perhaps had less need of protective foods than people today."<sup>105</sup>

*Was it good food?*—Contemporary accounts would hardly lead us to believe that the food of 1860 was good food, well prepared. Cookery, of course, is hardly a science, and a critical appraisal must needs be "unscientific"; we must remember, too, that those who had most to say about American cooking were those who did not simply take it for granted—were, in other words, travelers, who may well have carried their local prejudices along with them. (If an Englishman doesn't like American meat, is it the meat or his taste which is at fault? If a northerner expresses his dislike for southern cooking, is the cooking bad, or is it just different?) Some of these opinions I have mentioned in passing; there is no lack of interesting material for further quotation, but it would take us too far afield. Even when all allowances are made, there is still an abundance of evidence to support the familiar dictum that poor cooking is a characteristic of democracies.

Contemporary observers and some later historians have been of the opinion that Americans ate too much animal food. An even more insistent criticism was that there was too much frying of food and that the food consumed was too rich, with the result that dyspepsia was a common complaint. Thomas Low Nichols, an American physician who took up residence in England just before the Civil War, wrote:

The Americans, like the English, have a lack of skill in cookery. They make dishes enough. A common breakfast bill of fare will comprise twenty dishes. But butter and lard are so cheap that they are used with great profusion, and the best viands and vegetables are rendered indigestible. Hot bread, made with lard and strong alkalies, and soaked with butter, hot griddle cakes covered with butter and syrup; meats fried in fat or baked in it; potatoes dripping with grease; ham and eggs fried in grease into a leathery

<sup>105</sup> P. 24.

indigestibility—all washed down with many cups of strong Brazil coffee—these are some of the things which Americans eat for breakfast, and when they fall ill—as of course they must—then come loads of all the medicines advertised in their newspapers or given by their doctors.<sup>106</sup>

Such criticisms were common.<sup>107</sup> I am inclined to think that Americans were—and are—too much given to frying their food, but whether the apparent decrease in “dyspepsia” since the fifties is the result of refinements in cookery and eating habits I am not so sure. One does get the impression that in the middle years of the nineteenth century nearly everyone suffered from dyspepsia,<sup>108</sup> but a large part of this is certainly to be accounted for by the lack of precise diagnosis.

There is at least one good reason for believing that Americans lacked a well-developed taste for food: time after time one reads that they ate in a hurry. Even in the most luxurious hotel dining-rooms, apparently, the guests rushed in, gulped down their food as fast as they could, and then dashed out again. It is hard to believe that a people so given to bolting their food can really have enjoyed eating it or have developed much skill in its preparation. We can hardly blame the American family for not having had fresh foods the year around or for the lack of variety in their diet. But there should have been plenty of good, wholesome food—the country was still an agricultural country, and there were great opportunities for home production of garden truck—and such food does not demand elaborate preparation. More than that, some Americans displayed a certain ingenuity

<sup>106</sup> Nichols, I, 369.

<sup>107</sup> A modern historian writes: “The variety of foods which Chicagoans of the ‘fifties and ‘sixties might have did not guarantee, however, freshness, good quality, and careful cooking. Visitors to the city complained that the fish of the Upper Lakes was coarse and that meats were either almost raw or swimming in grease; and Chicagoans themselves held that much of the cooking done in the city was ‘only a few degrees removed from the savages’ that had been driven ‘off the soil.’ . . . Lack of moderation in eating and ignorance as to the proper balance of goods and as to food combinations demanded a toll in digestive upsets, for which, however, there were advertised innumerable cures” (Pierce, II, 463); cf. also Rhodes, III, 70.

<sup>108</sup> J. D. Burns wrote that dyspepsia pressed upon the whole people but attributed it to the bolting of food and to the “misuse of saliva” (p. 4). As early as 1859 the *New York Times* announced that the reign of “Dyspepsia Regina” seemed to be nearing an end (*New York Times*, October 15, 1869, cited by Cummings, pp. 72-73).

in creating new dishes, making use of indigenous foodstuffs.<sup>109</sup> Somehow, the greater part of the population seem not to have cared whether their food was skilfully cooked, as long as there was plenty of it. Probably a good appetite due to hard labor had something to do with it.

NOTE ON THE "VICES":<sup>110</sup> THE USE OF LIQUOR AND TOBACCO

*Liquor.*—The Americans had from the beginning been great drinkers of hard liquor, and they were great drinkers in 1860. In the big cities there were bars by the thousand, and in the smaller cities by the hundred; in rural regions the crossroads tavern was the general meeting place. The amount of drinking at hotel bars and the universality of the custom of standing treat convinced many foreigners that an enormous amount of liquor was consumed; others, annoyed by the "Maine Law" and astonished at the popularity of the temperance movement, thought the Americans were becoming a nation of teetotalers. George Augustus Sala, the British journalist, showed greater insight than did most of his compatriots:

When seltzer and sherry are taken, they are gulped down in the morning, to cure the ailments known as "hot coppers" or "whiskey in the hair." As a rule, our cousins loathe the very sight of port wine; but they drink it sometimes, because it is very dear and sounds grand. Hot grog is sometimes imbibed in the winter time, but it is taken standing—and gulped, not sipped. Much as you may have heard about mint juleps, egg noggs, smashes, Windsor-coolers, skins, morning glory, Tom and Jerry, private smiles, corpse revivers, fiscal agents, four-forty-four, Jersey lightning, monitor, swamp-angel, eye-

<sup>109</sup> Jefferson Williamson lists as American contributions clam and fish chowder; pumpkin and sweet-potato pie; a number of corn preparations, including corn on the cob, Indian pudding, corn fritters, succotash, hominy; catsup, and other tomato preparations, including soup, Saratoga chips; chicken à la king; Philadelphia pepper pot; porterhouse steak; flapjacks, Graham bread, cinnamon buns; Parker House rolls; chocolate pie; candied yams; and, a little later than the fifties, lobster à la Newberg (*The American Hotel: An Anecdotal History* [New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1930], p. 9).

<sup>110</sup> The inclusion of liquor in the chapter on food, for this ante bellum period, needs no defense; for putting tobacco in the same chapter I can give none—it simply fits nowhere else, yet is not sufficiently important to justify a separate chapter.

I have not taken it upon myself, here or elsewhere, to discuss the other "vices," though some of them, such as gambling and prostitution, undeniably have their economic aspects.

opener, mustache-twister, gin-sling, timble doodle, stone fence, with other professed "American drinks"—there are said to be three hundred and sixty-five of them, one for every day in the year—the majority of these high-sounding beverages are of a purely "fancy" order, devised by cunning bar-keepers down town to puff their establishments, and others are purely mythical. In very hot weather a cobbler or a julep is occasionally taken; but, throughout the states, and in all classes of society, the two universal drinks are, early in the morning, the cocktail—a mixture of alcohol, bitters, and sugar—and at any period of the day or night a dram of Bourbon whiskey very slightly diluted with ice water. The drinkers rush into a bar; the bar-keeper hands them the whiskey bottle; they pour out as much or as little as they choose, add a dash of water, and swallow the mixture as though it were a seidlitz powder. No other mystery is there in the grand ceremony of "taking the oath," "putting oneself outside suthin'," or "liquoring up." And then they bolt away from the bar, to meet perhaps on the threshold a friend, with whom they immediately return, and "take the oath," or "put themselves outside suthin'" again. . . .

At the first blush, the Americans strike a foreigner as being an exceedingly drunken people. You hear of cabinet ministers, clergymen, judges, barristers, senators, members of the Legislature, being habitually "tight." You cannot fail to observe an immense amount of "tightness" during your walks abroad. But, on closer acquaintance, you become aware of the existence of a very large section of the community who are total abstainers from every kind of fermented beverage. Nor are they necessarily temperance orators or professed teetotalers. They don't drink, that is all. Drinking or "taking tobacco" are looked upon in decent society in the country towns as simply vicious and shameful habits, and nothing is commoner than to hear a person spoken of as "having no vices," meaning that he neither drinks, smokes, nor chews. As regards the other sex, ninety-nine women out of a hundred never touch anything stronger than iced-water, tea, and coffee.<sup>111</sup>

The manufacture and consumption of beer, and especially of lager beer, increased steadily after about 1840, chiefly owing to the increase in the German population. In cities where the German population was large, as New York, Cincinnati, and St. Louis, beer gardens were much frequented. It is difficult to write about the consumption of beer and ale (porter and stout were but little used) in quantitative terms, as the statistics are notoriously unreliable. The 3,812,346 barrels reported to the 1860 Census would have represented about  $3\frac{3}{4}$  gallons per capita,<sup>112</sup> but, while imports were insignificant, there may well have been considerable home-brewing which did not get into the re-

<sup>111</sup> Sala, II, 313-15.

<sup>112</sup> The Census figures are discussed critically in Wells and others, pp. 24-25.



ports. An official estimate places the per capita consumption of all malt beverages at 3.22 gallons in 1860. This shows a considerable rise over the 1.36 gallons in 1840 but is far short of the 20.66 gallons reached in 1911, the peak year (from which it declined to 14.59 gallons in 1918).<sup>113</sup> Brewing continued to be a large-scale industry, and the output, whatever its quality, was low in price—about six dollars a barrel seems to have been the usual wholesale price.

The Census returns for distilled liquors include industrial alcohol, so that they are useless in estimating liquor consumption. The Revenue Commission was unable to reach any conclusion as to the actual consumption of spirits prior to the imposition of the Civil War excise tax. It pointed out that raw whiskey had almost everywhere retailed at 7-15 cents a quart, or 25-40 cents a gallon, and that farmers frequently bought it by the barrel for the free use of their hands.<sup>114</sup> The usual price for all drinks, plain or fancy, in the best bars was 10 cents; in the Far West transportation costs made them more expensive. In Denver whiskey was \$3.00 a gallon in 1859, but plentiful at 25 cents a drink. In Salt Lake City it was even more expensive, and in China Town, Nevada, it was \$3.00 a gallon as at Denver.<sup>115</sup> By the early sixties the price of liquor in San Francisco had gone down to the eastern price of a dime a glass; and the customer, besides helping himself freely from the bottle, could enjoy a free lunch of bread, cheese, cold meats, sausages, and the like.<sup>116</sup> All

<sup>113</sup> *The Statistical Record of the Progress of the United States, 1800-1920*, p. 799. The basis for estimate is not indicated, but it obviously fails to make any allowance for home-brewed and otherwise unreported beer.

<sup>114</sup> Wells *et al.*, pp. 166, 169. *The Statistical Record of the Progress of the United States* puts the consumption of distilled beverages in 1860 at 89,968,651 gallons, or 2.86 gallons per capita. The method of computation is not stated, but I suspect that the figure includes industrial alcohol. The 2.86 per capita in 1860 was the high point, from which it fell to 0.88 gallons in 1918 (p. 799).

<sup>115</sup> Hafen, "Supplies and Market Prices in Pioneer Denver," *Colorado Magazine*, IV (1927), 137; Greeley, *Recollections*, p. 366; T. S. Kenderdine, *A California Tramp* (Newtown, Pa., 1888), pp. 109-10; Greeley, *Overland Journey*, pp. 201-2; Simpson, p. 90. For other liquor prices see U.S. Department of the Treasury, *Annual Report of the Secretary for the Year 1863* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1863), pp. 354-55; also *Hunt's Merchants' Magazine*, XLV (1861), 46-47.

<sup>116</sup> Sutherland, pp. 26-27.

over the country the bulk of consumption was made up of cheap raw whiskey; in many dives in the big cities it was viciously adulterated. Rum—in earlier days the great American drink—seems to have waned in popularity.

There was a time, just before the Civil War, when it appeared that the United States might become a wine-drinking nation. The fifties saw the birth of commercial wine manufacture; and in Ohio, New York, California, and other states large vineyards were coming into production. But, while some of the wealthy served wine at their formal dinners, they consumed little in the family circle; and the attempts to popularize wine-drinking among the common people made no headway.<sup>127</sup>

I do not feel any competence to interpret the trends in liquor consumption. The people of 1860 led a strenuous physical life, their standard of living was (compared with ours) low, and they had neither time nor opportunity for the sort of recreation they needed. The laboring classes must have felt impelled to escape from a rather brutal sort of existence through an equally brutal sort of indulgence. For many the saloon was the only place to be sociable. The decline in the consumption of such liquors is the result of numerous factors: the growth of the temperance movement and the popularization of soft drinks were direct influences, while the increasing amount of leisure and the rise in the standard of living also played a part; perhaps the spread of education deserves some credit. But, certainly, as life became less rough, there was less need for a rough sort of escape from it. This, as well as the growth in the German population, helps explain also the growth in the consumption of beer—a milder, less stimulating (or less deadening) beverage. One might have expected that the United States would become a nation of wine-drinkers, but the Americans failed to acquire any capacity for quiet, leisurely enjoyment. The cultivation of a taste for wine was out of keeping with the nervous, active temperament which continues to be characteristic of this country

<sup>127</sup> *The Statistical Record of the Progress of the United States* estimated the consumption of wine at 10,804,687 gallons, or 0.34 gallons per capita, in 1860. The peak was reached in 1909 and 1911, with a per capita consumption of 0.67 gallons, from which it declined to 0.48 gallons per capita in 1918 (p. 799).

*The use of tobacco in 1860.*—The form in which the official reports of the production and manufacture of tobacco are given for the ante bellum period makes it impossible to be at all sure about the amount actually consumed. Gratton refers to an (unidentified) official estimate of annual consumption made in 1842, which placed consumption at 7 pounds per capita, which is slightly above present consumption.<sup>118</sup> But a calculation by D. W. Cheever in 1860 put the consumption at only about 2 pounds per capita in 1840 and  $3\frac{1}{2}$  pounds in 1850.<sup>119</sup> My own impression, obtained from various manipulations of the 1860 data, is that the per capita consumption was not greatly less than it is today.

But there can be no doubt that the form in which tobacco is used has changed, if the amount has not. Probably more than half the tobacco used in 1860 was chewed.<sup>120</sup> Baxter wrote that “thousands of men all over the Union keep their jaws in perpetual motion from sunrise to sunset”;<sup>121</sup> and this chewing and spitting that went with it provoked derisive comment from almost every single visitor to the country in the fifties and sixties. Snuff dipping was also common among women of the lower social scale, particularly in the South. Cigarettes were not yet used, but cigars, most of them very cheap in price,<sup>122</sup> were smoked in great number. (The statement is frequently made in reference to this period that with cigars three for a cent and whisky a quarter a gallon dissipation was hardly an extravagance.) There was a good deal of pipe-smoking, but almost en-

<sup>118</sup> I, 65 n.

<sup>119</sup> “Tobacco,” *Atlantic Monthly*, VI (1860), 191-92.

<sup>120</sup> As late as 1880, three-fourths of the manufactures were plug and fine-cut chewing, and although plug was used to some extent for pipe tobacco, only about half the total was used for smoking (J. R. Dodge, “Statistics of Manufacture of Tobacco and of Its Commercial Distribution, Exportation, and Prices,” *Tenth Census*, Vol. III: *Productions of Agriculture* [Washington: Government Printing Office, 1883], p. 890).

<sup>121</sup> William Edward Baxter, *America and the Americans* (London: G. Routledge & Co., 1855), p. 104.

<sup>122</sup> All tobacco prices were low. The average retail price of snuff in Massachusetts during the fifties was 26¢ a pound, and the price of smoking tobacco was 28½¢ a pound (Massachusetts, Bureau of Labor and Industries, *Annual Report for the Year 1885*, p. 452).

tirely of clay pipes. Some men had their meerschaums, but briar pipes, with hard-rubber mouthpieces, were only just beginning to come into use. Pipe-smoking among women, as now, was confined to the lowest class and chiefly to the out-of-the-way districts; among very old women smoking seems not to have been unusual.<sup>1</sup> (While the fifties saw the beginnings of the commercial manufacture of chewing gum,<sup>123</sup> it did not for many years become at all important. Children outside the cities continued to chew the natural gums, usually spruce gum, as they had for many years past and continued to do for many more years.)

<sup>123</sup> The *Scientific American* (II [January 28, 1860], 67) reported that a single manufacturer had produced 7,000,000 rolls—which the periodical figured was the equivalent of four times that many “chews”—in six months of 1859. At least one brand of spruce chewing gum was widely advertised, laying particular stress upon its beneficial effects upon the teeth and breath (Pierce, II, 462). Sala (I, 245) wrote of chewing gum being on sale at drugstores.

## CHAPTER IV

### ARCHITECTURE AND INTERIOR DECORATION

#### HOUSE CONSTRUCTION

*The importance of housing.*—Shelter is second only to food as a basic necessity of life; but it is even more difficult to set up objective standards for adequacy in housing than it is for adequacy in diet. Some measures for volume, heating, lighting, and the like might be applied, but general agreement as to minimum standards would still be lacking. As a practical matter these minimum standards are irrelevant, anyway. Of the amount spent for housing, in 1860 or today, only a relatively small proportion would be required if the only demand were protection of life against the rigors of climate; the larger proportion goes toward satisfying the desire for comfort, convenience, and beauty, and toward keeping up appearances.

His home—and it is significant that this was even more true in 1860 than it is now—is the place where a person spends most of his time. It is a place to be lived in—the center of his existence. A pleasant home life is more important to him than are all the pleasures to be found outside the home; and, while family relationships are the most significant element in such a home life, it is worth pointing out that inadequacies in housing may themselves contribute to family discord. But what makes a home attractive? What makes it a pleasant place to live in? This is the sort of question the economist, who studiously avoids value judgments, is likely to dismiss as “outside his field.” It is not so much a question of the use of resources as it is of taste: good taste may make a cottage a delight; lack of it may make the mansion unbearable.

How, then, are we to evaluate housing in 1860? Many people found their homes lacking in attractiveness because the economy could not make better houses available to

them; many others had to blame only their lack of taste and lack of interest. There is no way I can strike a balance between these two—all I can do is to describe conditions as they actually were. First, however, I want to summarize the attainments in house design and construction by 1860. I need not emphasize the fact that the economy could not have made available to everyone houses as good as architects could then plan them and builders build them. These were only for the well-to-do.

*Architectural characteristics of the period.*<sup>1</sup>—The United States has never developed a distinctive style of architecture; and in 1860, perhaps even more than now, architects drew upon a variety of European fashions, old and new.<sup>2</sup> By the late thirties "Greek Revival" had become almost a national style of architecture; and, despite serious competition by other styles, the "slavish imitation" of the Greek lived on as the basic style down to the Civil War. So much of this Greek Revival survives that a detailed description is hardly necessary. Whatever material was used, there was a conscious attempt to imitate stone. No effort seems to have been made to use native materials in such a way as to bring out their own true beauty; instead, brick was painted gray, plaster or stucco was marked off in patterns giving the impression of stone, and if wood was used the boards were laid flush to give a smooth surface. The roofs afford a good illustration of the difficulties attendant upon using old forms under new conditions: following the Greek model the roofs were low-pitched, making them too flat for shingles, while metal roofs were both unsightly and too hot for comfort. Pretentious houses had porticoes or at least pilasters on the corners. Cast-iron ornaments, especially window grilles, balconies, and balustrades, were very popular.

<sup>1</sup> Discussions of the architecture of the period are to be found in any history of American architecture; see, e.g., Henry-Russell Hitchcock, *The Architecture of H. R. Richardson and His Times* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1936); Fiske Kimball, *American Architecture* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1928); and Thomas F. Tallmadge, *The Story of Architecture in America* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., Inc., 1927).

<sup>2</sup> As I shall point out later, there were distinctive American modifications of the old forms to make them conform to American conditions.

During the forties and fifties suburban and country houses largely followed the older plans, but in the cities there were new developments. Absolutely plain fronts, of smooth red brick with stone sills and lintels of white marble, were characteristic of Philadelphia. Around New York City, while Grecian mansions had partially been succeeded by Italian and Gothic styles, in the city itself the scarcity and cost of building sites had led to an entirely changed architecture. Many of the new houses going up in the fifties were "colony houses," with a front of dressed stone and marble, not over twenty feet wide. The first ("basement") story had a hall and an office, the second story three connecting rooms with sliding doors; there were no halls to use up expensive space.<sup>3</sup> The French ("mansard" or "curb") roof was occasionally to be seen, distinguished from any of its predecessors by the shortness and steepness of the first slope above the cornice and by the comparative invisibility of the flatter, upper slope. It provided an attic story hardly smaller than the main stories. But by the end of the fifties the French roof was only beginning to be familiar even in the East.

In upstate New York many houses retained Georgian features, as dormer windows and red-brick construction. The high basement containing the kitchen, the long narrow hall, the parlor and drawing-room, the dining-room behind—these remained in vogue for some years after the Civil War. But for the most part the Greek Revival style was followed all over the country, for large houses and small. Wherever towns and regions prospered in the thirties and forties the white porticoes were to be found, fronting or surrounding the houses. Along the Gulf it was particularly common to have the columns surrounding the house, with balconies between, suitable to the climate. In the states beyond the Alleghenies and the Ohio the imitation of the temple was even more nearly universal than on the seaboard. When the wave of emigration in the thirties swept out along the newly opened Erie Canal and across the Great Lakes, it brought with it the classic ideal, fitted to the

<sup>3</sup> See "New-York Daguerreotyped. Private Residences," *Putnam's Magazine*, III (1854), 233-48.

white-painted farmhouse.<sup>4</sup> The same passion for unity of form brought, along with the rectangular temple, a more centralized scheme—square, circular, or octagonal. The most curious of these were the octagonal houses which, in the fifties, were scattered everywhere; many of them still survive in the northeastern states.<sup>5</sup>

It was inevitable that there should be a reaction on the part of architects and people of fashion against a style which had been so commonly accepted. But the designs offered as substitutes were Italian villas, Swiss chalets, Indian pavilions, and Norman and Byzantine castles. Such exotic styles filled the pages of the books of the architects of the fifties;<sup>6</sup> and the wealthy, especially the newly rich, took them up. For a time Romanesque styles were popular, but the chief rival to the Greek Revival was a Gothic revival. None of these succeeded in catching the public fancy, and before the Civil War they had been almost completely driven out by the more popular Greek.

*Building construction.*—The years prior to 1860 had seen no revolution in building materials. Occasional attempts to popularize the use of concrete had met with little enthusiasm, and houses continued to be built of stone, brick, stucco, or wood.

<sup>4</sup> Toward the Civil War the pure style became corrupted by jigsaw bracketings, thin, square posts, and ornamented window and doorframes.

<sup>5</sup> See O. S. Fowler, *A Home for All, or . . . the Octagonal Mode of Building* (New York: Fowler & Wells, 1853). For more about Fowler—best known as a phrenologist—and his octagonal houses see Carl Carmer, *The Hudson* (New York: Farrar & Rinehart, 1939), chap. xxiv.

<sup>6</sup> See, e.g., Daniel T. Atwood, *Atwood's Country and Suburban Houses* (New York: Orange Judd Co., 1882 [first published, 1871]); M. Field, *City Architecture* (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1854); Samuel Sloan, *The Model Architect* (Philadelphia: F. S. Jones & Co., 1854); and *City and Suburban Architecture* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott & Co., 1859); Calvert Vaux, *Villas and Cottages* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1857); Gervaise Wheeler, *Rural Homes* (New Orleans: Burnett & Bostwick, 1854); George E. Woodward and F. W. Wheeler, *Woodward's Country Homes* (New York: Office of "The Horticulturist," 1865).

Even Andrew Jackson Downing, in many respects ahead of his time as an architect and landscape gardener, could not free himself from this influence (see his *Cottage Residences* [4th ed.; New York: John Wiley & Son, 1865] and *The Architecture of Country Houses* [New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1851]).

In almost any city east of the Mississippi a few houses built as early as the fifties are still standing. Some of these have a sort of impressiveness and grandeur, but many of them now seem only grotesque.



Those who could afford it preferred stone; it was most commonly used in the Northeast, where stone was plentiful. Brick houses were common both in the North and in the South. A small amount of building was done in the half-timbered style, but the climate was such as to make it less durable than in its European setting. The inexpensiveness of wood relative to other building materials made it much the most commonly used. The cost differential in its favor was increased with the development of the "balloon frame" in the late thirties or early forties. The balloon frame was simpler, cheaper, and easier to construct than the old heavy-timber, mortise-and-tenon frame, and by the middle fifties was being widely used, especially in the new, rapidly expanding cities like Chicago and San Francisco. On the middle western and southern frontiers wood was the natural building material.

The term "basement" was usually applied to the ground floor; the floor beneath that, whether finished or unfinished, was the "cellar." Especially in the Middle states the kitchen was usually placed on this lowest floor, with the dining-room above; but there was a trend toward moving the kitchen also to the main floor, usually in a separate wing. The cellar also included space for the furnace, if there was a furnace, and for fuel. Other accommodations were in keeping with the needs of the occupants—the cellar of a farmhouse might be divided into milk-rooms, storage-rooms for other goods, and a lumber-room, while that of a large city house might have rooms for food storage, a laundry-room, and perhaps servants' quarters. An unfinished cellar or a dead space under the main floor was likely to be a source of disagreeable odors, and the plans for new houses invariably called for a ventilated space under the house. Some houses, especially cottages, had a cellar under only a part of the house.

Foundations were solidly built of brick, stone, or concrete. The construction of the walls depended not only upon the ideas of the builder but upon the climate. The best practice, in building brick or stone houses was to build with a hollow wall, insuring protection against dampness and extremes of temperature.

When there was no hollow wall, an inside (lath and plaster) wall was usually "furred off" from the outer (brick or stone) wall. Construction of wooden side walls differed considerably, according to the preferences of the builder. The most common was the familiar clapboard style, with the clapboards nailed to the frame horizontally and lapped over. Some preferred to use strong, rough boards, tongued and grooved, put on vertically, the joints covered with inch boards. Insulation under the clapboards might be tarpaper or felt; but in New England painstaking builders used a double weather boarding, and in the North generally the space inside the wall was filled in with cheap brick. Two or three layers of plaster would be applied in a good house. Outside walls were commonly painted, but even as late as 1860 many were not.

Even in the most luxurious mansions floors were almost never of hard wood. White pine was the most common flooring, but other easily worked woods were also used. Doors were swung on metal hinges and secured by metal locks turned by doorknobs; outside doors might be provided with Yale locks. Inside, sliding doors could be installed to make two communicating rooms usable as a single drawing-room. Window glass was being manufactured in larger quantities than ever before, and the panes were larger (usually from eight-by-ten to ten-by-fourteen). It was said of New York City that plate glass had become almost universal in houses of any pretensions;<sup>7</sup> and the new houses in the cities were being equipped with sliding sashes, sash cords, and pulleys. Still, homes had few windows if measured by present standards. This was probably due at least in part to the difficulty of heating houses with much window space, in part to the higher cost of building, and perhaps in part to the natural tendency to follow old habits of construction. Windows were frequently shuttered, and Venetian blinds were commonly advertised. Whether or not fly screens could be had I am not quite sure; if they could, almost no one availed himself of the opportunity.

Various types of roofing materials were used, depending upon

<sup>7</sup> "New-York Daguerreotypied."

the style and slope of the roof and upon the means and preferences of the builder. Shingles were regarded as the best all-round material, if the pitch was not too low; pine shingles were ordinarily used, but when some other sort of shingles was cheaper locally they were used instead. Slate roofs had advantages of beauty, cleanliness, and permanence, but they required care in installation and might prove disappointing unless the best quality was used. For very low-pitched roofs leaded and painted tin and corrugated iron were best. Tile roofs were used only infrequently. There was some experimentation with composition roofings.

*Plumbing and sanitary facilities.*—The provision of a convenient and dependable water supply was a difficult problem, especially outside the larger cities. Where there was no municipal water supply, dependence for water for drinking and cooking was upon wells; rain water for washing could be caught in cisterns. Rain-water pipes led the water from the roof to the cistern, which might be underground or might be on the roof or inside the house above the ground floor to give pressure. There were obvious objections to a roof cistern, and an inside reservoir, requiring constant refilling, was not much better. The best system seemed to be a small cistern placed just above the bath, supplied by a force pump from below. Such a reservoir or city water could supply the bath, water closet, sink, and washbasins, and gravity provided sufficient pressure for ordinary taps. Underground cisterns could be improved by the use of filters of gravel and charcoal or by patent filters.

A small force pump could bring water from the cistern or from the well or spring through a lead pipe into the house. The sink, perhaps six inches deep and twenty by forty inches in area, would be located in the back porch, the kitchen, or even in the living-room. Some of them were of cast iron, but most were of wood, covered over with tin or sheet iron. Hot-water heaters could provide the sinks with running hot as well as cold water. Outside the cities<sup>8</sup> water could be drained to an outside drain or to a cesspool perhaps eight feet deep, sloping inward toward

<sup>8</sup> For drainage in the cities see below, chap. viii.

the bottom. The dirty, greasy water drained from the kitchen had a tendency to clog the cesspool, and some cesspools were provided with trapstones to minimize this difficulty.

The water closets of the first half of the nineteenth century were mostly of the pan type, in which a lever tipped over a pan of water into the stool and a pipe drained it away into the cesspool; but by 1860 the hopper type was coming into more frequent use. Such water closets were necessarily limited to the cities which had a steady water supply; but even in the country makeshift water closets could be contrived—on one such type a pull on a cord opened a valve on an overhead reservoir, the released water flowing down a pipe to flush the stool and pass on into the drain. When a regular water closet was too expensive or too difficult to install, a privy abutting on the house or connecting with it might be so constructed that, during rains, rain water from a drain pipe flowed into the privy vault and flushed it. Some light on the improvement yet to be made in water closets, as well as on the public attitude toward them, is shown by the report of the Chicago sewerage commissioners that the English had found water closets, except in “well regulated families,” a greater nuisance than the ordinary privy.<sup>9</sup>

The usual bathtub was an oak or pine box lined with copper, lead, or zinc. The more elaborate ones had paneled and molded fronts and were lined with copper. The cast-iron tub had been put on the market in the early fifties, but even these were incased in wood. There were also shower baths, although not in such common use as tubs. Both tub and shower baths could be connected to hot and cold running water.

*Heating and ventilation.*—In the two or three decades just preceding the Civil War some notable improvements had been made in stove construction:

In 1836 James Atwater, of New York, made a stove with an illuminated case of cast iron and mica. It had inclosed flues, a check-flue, and a direct

<sup>9</sup> Chicago, Board of Sewerage Commissioners, *Chicago Sewerage: Report of the Results of Examination Made in Relation to Sewerage in Several European Cities, in the Winter of 1856-7. By the Chief Engineer of the Board of Sewerage Commissioners* [E. S. Chesbrough] (Chicago, 1858), p. 90.

draft-damper. The Stanley heating-stove, with return and exit flues inclosed in the four corners, was perfected about this time. In 1845 Dr. Bushness invented a cylinder-stove with the inside lined with fire-clay, and having a pipe at each of the four corners, down which the heat returned to a hollow base, and thence went up through a pipe at the back.

Gas-burners or surface burners next appeared in the order of time. These were both round and oval, and by perforated fire-pots, or perforated gas-rings at the top of the brick, the coal was more perfectly consumed than in any former device. They were mostly made of sheet iron; and generally the flues which returned the heat to the base were inclosed in the stove body. The most popular of these was the P. P. Stewart's oval and round parlor-stove, first made about 1860. . . .

Anthracite coal was brought into use in America between 1820 and 1830, being afterward used to a limited extent for heating in open grates. . . .

Jordan L. Mott, Sr., . . . in 1833 constructed a self-feeding base-burner. In this stove he introduced the burning of the chestnut size of anthracite in thin layers, fed from a magazine. . . . In 1852 D. G. Littlefield, of Albany, constructed a self-feeding base-burning stove, which he improved on in 1856.<sup>10</sup>

Similar progress had been made in cooking stoves. P. P. Stewart had made an iron cooking stove in 1832 and had developed a "summer and winter cooking stove" in 1836, the latter having the firebox hung in the oven, so that the flame passed down the front, along the bottom, and up the back so as to distribute the heat equally.<sup>11</sup>

P. P. Stewart's first patent [cooking stove] was in 1838. The fire-box hung in the upper part of the oven, so that the heat from both sides and the bottom was thrown into it. The flame passed down in one sheet in front of the oven, then under and up the rear to the pipe collar on top of the stove. Stewart's large-oven stove was made in 1850, and was at first a three-flue construction, but he soon afterward adopted a sheet flue under the oven, and three flues at the back. Samuel Pierce about this time invented the curved plate, now [1895] generally used at the front of the oven, which threw the ashes from the grate into an ash pit in the hearth. There have been no important changes in stove construction since that date. . . .

In 1855 John Van, of Cincinnati, placed on the market the first modern wrought-iron range, intended to be used on Mississippi steamboats; and since that date this branch of the trade has increased very rapidly.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>10</sup> Jeremiah Dwyer, "Stoves and Heating Apparatus," *One Hundred Years of American Commerce*, II, 358-60; see also James L. Bishop, II, 576-78.

<sup>11</sup> H. H. Manchester, *The Evolution of Cooking and Heating* (Troy, N.Y.: Fuller & Warren Co., 1917), *passim*.

<sup>12</sup> Dwyer, p. 360. In the late fifties such advertisements as this one (for P. P. Stewart's "improved large oven summer and winter cooking stove") were being printed: "This stove is so constructed, and of such materials, that the heat may be held within the

Gas cooking stoves were also in use during the fifties.<sup>13</sup>

Throughout this period of improvement, the production of stoves was steadily increasing, and in 1860 about one million stoves were manufactured.<sup>14</sup> Cooking and heating stoves were by then in common use, some burning wood and others hard coal. Large houses were built with permanent ranges of iron and brick, with a range breast to carry off the fumes, warming ovens overhead, and with connections for supplying the house with running hot water. (There are no accurate statistics for coal production before the Civil War, but the total production for the United States in the year 1860 was probably somewhere between 14,000,000 and 15,000,000 short tons, or about half a ton per capita,<sup>15</sup> most of it Pennsylvania anthracite. What proportion of this was used industrially it is impossible to estimate.)

Chimneys, whether for stove or for fireplace, were in the North customarily located in the interior of the house, so that the heat carried up the chimney would also help in heating the house; in the South they were more likely to be carried up outside the house.

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*stove*, or thrown off to warm the apartment, at pleasure. The workmanship is so perfect that a wood fire is kept upon the grate over night, and a coal fire effected sensibly by moving the draft-damper the 32nd part of an inch. In its full dress bread can be baked in the most perfect manner *after the fire is all removed from the stove*, and culinary operations carried on successfully with a *single stick of wood at a time*. The following, being the result of a trial recently made, and which can be duly certified, will show the capacity of the stove: On the 2d June, 1857, *sixty loaves of bread*, weighing 2 lbs. each, were perfectly baked with but *one fire*, and with the use of only *fifteen pounds of coal*. The stove is set up on *three months' trial*, and out of 10,000 of the new pattern already sold, less than twenty have been returned (*Dinsmore's American Railroad and Steam Navigation Guide* [New York, December, 1857]).

<sup>13</sup> *Scientific American*, III (1860), 56.

<sup>14</sup> Dwyer (p. 361), giving estimates prepared by the National Stove Manufacturers Association. Twenty-five thousand stoves were manufactured in 1830, 100,000 in 1840, 375,000 in 1850.

<sup>15</sup> E. L. Bogart (*Economic History of the American People* [2d ed.; New York: Longmans, Green & Co., 1935], p. 537) estimates the United States production at 14,334,000 short tons in 1860 (269,684,000 in 1900; 600,444,000 in 1920; 537,000,000 in 1930). Contemporary estimates, of much the same magnitude, are to be found in the *Scientific American*, X (1854), 69; *Hunt's Merchants' Magazine*, XXXIX (1858), 632; *DeBow's Review*, XXV (1858), 239, and XXVI (1859), 72; and *Hunt's Merchants' Magazine*, XL (1859), 625.

For perhaps a hundred years there had been experiments with central heating, and by 1860 more or less practical systems had been devised—by the fifties all the metropolitan business directories were carrying numerous advertisements for furnaces. Furnaces were still in the luxury class, not only because of the expense of installation, but because (at least in the popular opinion) furnaces were inefficient in that they required a tremendous consumption of fuel if they were to affect the more distant rooms. The furnace was installed in the “cellar,” with flues (sometimes pipes) leading to registers in the rooms above. Sometimes all floors were heated, frequently only the principal floor. Although they were not commonly applied to residence heating, both hot-water and steam-heating systems had been developed to the stage of practicability. Steam heating was fairly satisfactory for heating large buildings but was hard to control in small installations. It was generally agreed that hot-water heating was the most satisfactory, but it was not at all commonly adopted until much later.

As architects' specifications show, these improvements had not displaced the fireplace from its importance, even in the homes of the wealthy; and, even if central heating was used, the chambers were usually heated by fireplace.<sup>16</sup>

Friction matches had by the fifties become the “cheapest article of retail trade,”<sup>17</sup> and from the forties boxes of matches are mentioned quite casually. In the United States the daily production in 1860 was estimated at 36,000,000 matches, and matches

<sup>16</sup> David B. Reid, one of the foremost contemporary heating and ventilating engineers, mentioned some of the reasons, both sentimental and practical, for continuing to use fireplaces in his *Ventilation in American Dwellings* (New York: John Wiley, 1864). J. E. Cabot wrote: “It will be noticed that this supposes the use of open fireplaces. The open fireplace is not a necessary of life, but it is one of the first luxuries, and one that no man who can afford to eat meat every day can afford to dispense with. No furnace can supply the place of it; for, though the furnace is an indispensable auxiliary in severe cold, and though, well managed, it need not vitiate the air, yet, like all contrivances for supplying heated air instead of heat, it has the unsurmountable defect of not warming the body directly, nor until all the surrounding air be warmed first, and thus stop the natural reaction and the brace and stimulus derived from it” (“House-building,” *Atlantic Monthly*, X [1862], 423-31).

<sup>17</sup> Albert S. Bolles, *Industrial History of the United States* (Norwich, Conn.: Henry Bill Pub. Co., 1881), p. 542.

were sold at a penny a box, or 50 cents a gross, retail.<sup>18</sup> Only on the Frontier did people need to economize in their use.

The installation of a new ventilating system for the British houses of Parliament had been followed by ventilating systems in other public buildings on both sides of the Atlantic; and, with this impetus, the technique of ventilation had made rapid strides in a comparatively short time.<sup>19</sup> Architects' specifications called for ventilating flues, with registers installed in appropriate locations near floor and ceiling. Where provision was not made for running the ventilating flues through the walls, ventilating tubes or boxes were made to run as inconspicuously as possible through closets and along partitions. Special attention was given to ventilating bathrooms, when there was an inside water closet, and to bedrooms. (Tin ventilators were recommended for bedrooms as being as efficient as registers and cheaper.) Some buildings were provided with outside ventilators.<sup>20</sup>

*Lighting.*—Great improvements had been made in oil lamps since the perfection of the Argand lamp (1784) and the Carcel lamp (about 1800). The "moderator" lamp was invented in 1836 and quickly superseded most of the earlier types. It had a

<sup>18</sup> *Scientific American*, III (1860), 402, citing *Appleton's American Cyclopaedia*: Sala, II, 249; Massachusetts, Bureau of Labor and Industries, *Annual Report for the Year 1885*, p. 422.

<sup>19</sup> Note the publication of such careful studies as those of David Boswell Reid ("The Progress of Architecture in Relation to Ventilation . . .," *Annual Report of the Board of Regents of the Smithsonian Institution for the Year Ending June 30, 1856* [Washington: Government Printing Office, 1857], pp. 147-48; and *Ventilation in American Dwellings*) and of Luther V. Bell (*The Practical Methods of Ventilating Buildings* [Boston: Dambrell & Moore, 1848]; as well as such books as Robert Richie's *A Treatise on Ventilation* (London: Lockwood & Co., 1862), Henry Ruttan's *Ventilation and Warming of Buildings* (New York: G. P. Putnam, 1862), and Charles Hood's *Practical Treatise on Warming Buildings by Hot Water; on Ventilation, and the Various Methods of Distributing Artificial Heat* (London: Whittaker & Co., 1844).

<sup>20</sup> Progress in ventilation should not be overemphasized. It was only with the seventies that experiment came to be substituted for guesswork; and even as late as the seventies it was still generally believed that air became bad because of the diminution of oxygen and the increase in carbon dioxide—the "whole thought of ventilation was to prevent people from being poisoned by their own exhalation" (M. P. Ravenal [ed.], *A Half-Century of Public Health* [New York: American Public Health Assoc., 1921], pp. 335-38). Ravenal quotes an American physician as writing in 1850: "Viti-ated air produces deformity, imbecility, and idiocy" and encourages "pusillanimity and cowardice, vice, and intemperance in the use of intoxicating drinks." It "produces inaptitude for study and, therefore, ignorance."



spiral spring which forced a piston against the oil reservoir, forcing the oil upward through a vertical tube to the burner. Meanwhile, lamps were being devised to burn coal oil, which needed no special feeding system. A fine metal tube carried the coal oil from the bottom of the reservoir to a rose burner, where it was heated by the flames and vaporized, escaping through a small orifice in the burner. In 1845 the camphene or burning-fluid lamp became popular. This had two round-wick tubes, to which small caps were attached, to be placed over the tops when the lamp was not in use.<sup>21</sup>

Until petroleum products were used for lighting, the dependence was on turpentine, sperm oil, train oil, lard oil, tallow, stearine, and other animal and vegetable products. Lard oil, used in the "solar lamp" after 1843, was probably the best illuminant, but the smudgy, evil-smelling whale oil was much more widely used. In an attempt to conserve whale oil various compounds were used, the most popular being camphene, a mixture of turpentine and alcohol.<sup>22</sup> Before the war more than a million gallons a year of camphene were being distilled at Philadelphia, half that at Cincinnati.<sup>23</sup> Camphene gave a fairly bright light; and the lamp could be cleaner and neater than those using whale oil, but it was dangerously explosive. About 1850 it was discovered that a valuable oil could be procured

<sup>21</sup> For descriptions of the various types of oil lamps see M. Luckiesh, *Artificial Light* (New York: Century Co., 1920), pp. 53-54; Edward L. Youmans, *The Hand-Book of Household Science* (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1865 [first published, 1857], pp. 112-13; S. O. Beeton (ed.), *Beeton's Dictionary of Universal Information: Comprising a Complete Summary of the . . . Sciences . . .* (London: S. O. Beeton, 1861-65), p. 118.

Lamp chimneys had been required from the first use of the Argand lamp, but apparently they were not manufactured in the United States until the fifties and even then, though manufactured on a rather large scale, were likely to be short lived (*One Hundred Years of American Commerce*, II, 664).

<sup>22</sup> More properly, what was burned was "burning fluid," a mixture of camphene (turpentine redistilled) and highly rectified alcohol, in various proportions. Mixtures of camphene and rosin oil or of camphene and coal oil were also tried; but they required an Argand burner and, even so, smoked and choked up the lamps (*Scientific American*, XIII [1858], 133).

<sup>23</sup> Victor S. Clark, *History of Manufactures in the United States* ("Contributions to American Economic History from the Department of Economics and Sociology of the Carnegie Institution of Washington," Vols. II and VI [New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1929]), I, 493.

from certain grades of coal, and that by fractional distillation this product could be separated into paraffin (which could be used in making candles) and an illuminating and lubricating oil; when oil wells were brought into production in 1859 and after, these processes were adapted to use petroleum. By 1860 there were between fifty and sixty coal-oil refineries in the country.<sup>24</sup>

Lamps were made for the use of coal oil almost immediately, but their smoke and odor made the first ones unpopular. By 1860 the "modern" burner and chimney were in use, making combustion more complete, clarifying the flame, and avoiding the smoke and smell; the lamp, according to Bolles,<sup>25</sup> was then practically perfected. But, while in the three years previous to March, 1861, only 193 patents had been granted for petroleum-burning lamps, from March 1, 1862, to December 30, 1863, some 623 patents were granted.<sup>26</sup> The kerosene lamp, with its flat wick and glass chimney, seems to have caught on fairly rapidly.<sup>27</sup> Many, however, continued to burn camphene in 1860 and 1861 and did not change illuminants until the price of turpentine rose as a result of the Civil War. At that time the ordinary camphene lamp gave about twice as much light as a tallow candle, the kerosene lamp at least six times as much. Even as late as 1860 whale-oil lamps were still being used, but they were expensive and gave no better light than did tallow candles. After 1862 the kerosene lamp had no competitors, though later improvements increased its brilliancy from a candle-power of 6-20 in 1858-68 to one of 60-80 in the ordinary parlor lamp of the nineties.<sup>28</sup>

The use of manufactured gas dates from the early part of the century; and by 1855 there were 297 companies selling manufactured gas, serving a population of about 5,000,000 persons,

<sup>24</sup> Clark, II, 35; Bolles, p. 774.

<sup>25</sup> P. 776.

<sup>26</sup> J. L. Bishop, II, 499.

<sup>27</sup> It was estimated that by December, 1859, some 22,750 gallons of coal oil were manufactured daily. Between 250,000 and 300,000 dozen coal-oil lamps had been sold by manufacturers, of which about 150,000 were in use, the rest still in dealers' hands (*Scientific American*, II [1860], 3; *Hunt's Merchants' Magazine*, XLII [1860], 245).

<sup>28</sup> *One Hundred Years of American Commerce*, II, 664.

through 227,665 private meters.<sup>29</sup> Of the 381 cities and towns supplied with gas at the beginning of the Civil War, 337 were in the North and 44 in the South.<sup>30</sup> In the forties and fifties gas lamps came to be used to some extent in the homes of the upper and middle classes in such cities as Boston, New York, Philadelphia, and Baltimore, and architects were drawing up their plans to include facilities for gaslighting. In 1854 Bowditch brought out a regenerative lamp, and the principle was adopted in later lamps.<sup>31</sup> Until Edison patented his incandescent lamp twenty years later, only minor improvements in lighting were made.

#### FURNITURE AND FURNISHINGS

*Furniture.*—The mechanical saw was invented in 1814, the power circular saw in 1820, and the turning lathe and rip saw about 1838.<sup>32</sup> These made possible the furniture factories, which could produce large quantities of standardized pieces at low cost. It was only gradually, however, that the handicraft shops were superseded; during the fifties there were many of them, making to order high-grade pieces of furniture. Black walnut and light oak were both used in making furniture, but mahogany was more popular, its place threatened only by rosewood. Maple and satinwood were also used in the making of expensive furniture. Just before the sixties there was a fad for *papier mâché* furniture, large and small, and for a few years these were quite popular. There was little use of veneer, for the contemporary techniques for handling it were not very satisfactory.

<sup>29</sup> Emerson McMillin, "American Gas Interests," *One Hundred Years of American Commerce*, I, 295. During the first years of gas manufacture, soft coal was used almost exclusively, varied in some southern cities by rosin and pinewood. The New York Gas Company made the first gas from oil (1823) and later used rosin; in 1860 it was distilling English coals, and many other companies used English coals until the soft-coal mines of the United States were opened up (McMillin, pp. 297-300).

<sup>30</sup> Fite, p. 218.

<sup>31</sup> Luckiesh, p. 97.

<sup>32</sup> Marjorie Bacon Ford, "Style Cycles in American Furniture, 1830-1930" (unpublished M.A. thesis, Department of Home Economics, University of Chicago, 1930), p. 24; George W. Gay, "The Furniture Trade," *One Hundred Years of American Commerce*, II, 628.

The Greek Revival mansions were elaborately furnished and decorated; the new taste called for French rather than English styles, and Sheraton, Hepplewhite, and Adam gave way to Directoire and Empire. Most of the pieces were massive and heavy, although Phyfe was producing furniture notable for its delicacy and elegance.<sup>33</sup> In middle-class homes the second quarter of the nineteenth century was the heyday of the Boston rocker, the Hitchcock chair, and the banjo clock. Windsors were still favorites, many ladder-backs were made, there were rockers in all styles, and (for the first time) there was the overstuffed chair. Spool furniture, which had been the rage just after the invention of the lathe, had pretty much gone out of fashion, but painted furniture retained its popularity. By the fifties furniture had become characteristically Victorian—"a hodge-podge of plagiarism, though not wholly ungainly despite legs and arms borrowed from Louis Quinze, oval backs suggestive of Adam and the riotous carvings that in their turn were elaborations of Chippendale's more intricate tendencies."<sup>34</sup>

"American Victorian," which had apparently begun a little earlier, was at its best between 1845 and 1870. All but the cheapest Victorian furniture was handmade and finely done. With it in middle-class homes went glass chandeliers, flowered carpets and rugs, wax flowers, gold clocks under glass, bouquets of shells, wall pictures made of pheasants' feathers, stuffed hummingbirds, and similar ornaments. The Victorian parlor contained a sofa or lounge having a back and one arm; sometimes there was also a settee or ladies' small sofa. There was a variety of chairs, some with embroidered seats and backs. Every parlor contained a table for the album and at least one marble-topped table. Usually there were several footstools of various kinds. Secretaries and small desks for ladies were popular. Colors were brighter and draperies heavier and more elaborately looped, fringed, and tasseled than before. All the

<sup>33</sup> The most easily accessible description of the interiors of these mansions is that of Tallmadge, pp. 103-4.

<sup>34</sup> Most of the information of furniture styles and materials in this and the following paragraphs comes from Miss Ford's thesis; see also Ruth E. Finley, *The Lady of Godey's* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Co., 1931), pp. 142-44.

wealthy had bookcases and cabinets in their parlors. The larger bookcases rested on the floor and had cornices at the top; the smaller ones consisted of three or four shelves hanging on the wall.

The whatnot, seldom matching the other furniture, was essential. There was almost sure to be a piano—if there was no drawing-room there was a square piano with an elaborate case in the parlor. Mirrors were a popular form of decoration. The most fashionable was a huge pier glass inclosed in a heavily carved and gilded frame, rounded at the top and supplied with a small shelf and two legs at the bottom. Those who could not afford such elegance had cheval glasses which swung back and forth in a frame. The parlor always had a fireplace. In the early Victorian period the fireplace had an arched opening with a marble mantel. Later the mantel became a wooden shelf, and still later tiers of shelves which formed a sort of built-in bookcase. There was a work table for embroidering, and so universal was the popularity of embroidering that the work table was frequently to be found even in the drawing-room. Clocks had by 1860 become small “shelf clocks” and were in keeping with the other furniture. Many homes had small clocks elaborately decorated and covered with a rounded glass case. The room was decorated with other fancy articles of various kinds.

Victorian chairs were made for comfort and became more and more substantial; sofas followed chairs closely in design and materials. The greater part of the furniture was built upon the gracefully curving lines of Louis XV pieces. Upholstering might be plain or tufted; hair cloth was most commonly used, but there were also figured damask, brocade, plain and striped velvets, rep and flowered chintzes. Overstuffed furniture, which had been introduced just before 1850, had quickly become popular. Ottomans, hassocks, and footstools were mostly upholstered, following in their lines the lines of the chairs and sofas. Tables were of various designs, some having four legs and others being pedestals.

The design of cheaper furniture offers one more illustration of imitation as a substitute for taste. American designers could

have originated styles especially adapted to machine production—simple, sturdy, and comfortable. Instead, until about 1870, factory furniture continued to follow Victorian models. It was heavier and lacking in the finer features of the better furniture; and what carving there was, was coarser.<sup>35</sup> Elaborate whatnots were commonly found even in comparatively plain homes, and in the Middle West the ugly, exaggerated “Sleepy Hollow” rocker was popular. A number of furniture factories were started in the West, which used native timber; but all artistic furniture was purchased in the East.

Both kitchen and sitting-room chairs were like those now called kitchen chairs. The sitting-room also had a couple of rocking chairs with cushions. The family table was rectangular, usually with drop leaves. The kitchen was equipped with cupboards and shelves, but there was as yet no kitchen cabinet. In the bedroom the four-poster had been superseded by the mahogany-veneer, low-post bedstead and the French bedstead, and these in turn, during the fifties, were giving way to plain black-walnut bedsteads.<sup>36</sup> There were iron bedsteads, too; but the attractive ones cost as much as wood, and the cheaper ones were thought good enough only for the less well-to-do or for servants’ rooms. Spring beds were widely advertised.

*Other household furnishings.*—Up to 1850 only hand carpet looms were in use, and the production of carpetings was consequently very limited. In spite of transportation costs and heavy duties, imports of carpets from England and Scotland continued; and even after the use of power looms in the United States there was a tendency on the part of those who could afford them to prefer imported carpetings. But there was a rapid change in the domestic production of carpetings following Bigelow’s in-grain loom and, in 1848, his power loom for weaving Brussels and tapestry products. These developments increased the prod-

<sup>35</sup> Some of the furniture factories did change their styles, between 1850 and 1860, to Renaissance pieces, which could be made more attractively by machines (Gay, p. 629).

<sup>36</sup> Frances Clary Morse, *Furniture of the Olden Time* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1924), p. 83.

uct of the ingrain loom from 8 to 25 square yards a day, and the product of the Brussels loom from 7 to 25 yards.<sup>37</sup> By 1849 the cost of weaving Brussels carpets had been reduced from 30 cents a yard to 4 cents.<sup>38</sup> In the census year 1860 more than 13,000,000 yards of carpeting were produced, with an average value of 59 cents a yard.<sup>39</sup> Between 1850 and 1875 the houses of the wealthy came to be fully carpeted—the floors were covered to the walls and the carpets firmly nailed down—and even among the poor and rural classes rugs of carpeting dotted the floors of the more important rooms.<sup>40</sup> The wealthy also used small rugs in addition to carpets; but there were few if any large rugs in the modern sense, as the looms could not then weave wide strips and oriental rugs were apparently rare. Carpet sweepers were on the market and widely advertised.

Beds, and especially windows, were elaborately and frequently expensively draped. Plain worsteds, cotton damasks, and fine satins were used, and the fittings were likely to be highly ornate. Since Colonial days there had been some domestic manufacturing of wallpaper, but in the earlier times the paper had been printed by hand from blocks. After 1820 the business grew rapidly. The Fourdrinier machine made it possible to produce paper in rolls, and by the fifties rolls of paper could be printed by cylinder machines in six colors. Hand-printing was quickly

<sup>37</sup> Shephard Knapp, "American Carpets," *One Hundred Years of American Commerce*, II, 486. Bigelow-Hartford Carpet Co., *A Century of Carpet and Rug Making in America* (New York: Bigelow-Hartford Carpet Co., 1925). For a more extended treatment of the technical advance, see Arthur H. Cole and Harold F. Williamson, *The American Carpet Manufacture* ("Harvard Economics Studies," Vol. LXX [Cambridge, 1941]), chap. iv.

<sup>38</sup> *Eighth Census: Manufactures*, p. lvii.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, p. li. By 1904 (the peak year) this had risen to 82,671,000 yards. In 1859 the per capita production of domestic wool carpetings was 0.43 yards, with a value of \$0.26; the peak in per capita production was reached in 1889 at 1.08 yards (with a value of \$0.75). Imports failed to rise above 0.01 yards (Cole and Williamson, pp. 95-96). These figures fail to include family-made carpetings, of which the volume was almost certainly considerable, and rag rugs, straw mattings, and other floor coverings.

<sup>40</sup> Cole and Williamson, p. 81. The great bulk of the carpeting was, by modern standards, of a very low grade, from five-sixths to nine-tenths of the domestic production being of the ingrain type. As Cole and Williamson point out, the floors were soft wood and poorly constructed; the object of the carpet was to conceal their defects.

superseded. By 1860 the only wallpapers printed by hand were produced for the few who could afford to pay for fine workmanship and artistic design; it was reported that in originality of design and quality of product the machine-printed papers rivaled the best English and French papers.<sup>41</sup>

The parlor organ, once a conspicuous feature of the American home, had by 1860 yielded first place to the piano: only 12,643 melodeons were produced in the census year 1860 as compared with 21,797 pianos.<sup>42</sup> This was due, at least in part, to American improvements in pianos and piano manufacture. By 1837 Chickering had perfected the application of the full iron frame to square pianos, and Steinway's overstrung system, first used in 1855, soon became standard. After 1855 a few grand pianos were made, but most of the pianos were square, frequently with elaborate cases.<sup>43</sup>

The "short-shelf" clock had been invented early in the century; but the turning-point in the clock industry really came with the use of interchangeable machine-made wheels of rolled brass, beginning in 1837. By 1860 as good an eight-day clock could be obtained for \$3.00 or \$4.00 as would have sold for \$20.00 before 1837, and a one-day clock could be sold at a fair profit for 75 cents. The annual output of the five largest companies was about half a million clocks.<sup>44</sup> The success of these clocks interfered little with the continued sale of the more decorative varieties such as elaborate mantel clocks and banjo clocks.

Up to 1850 American potteries made no dinnerware except the cheapest kind of cream-colored crockery. During the fifties a number of potters started making yellow and Rockingham

<sup>41</sup> *Eighth Census: Manufactures*, pp. cxxix-cxxxi; J. L. Bishop, III, 72-73, 179-82, 305-6.

<sup>42</sup> *Eighth Census: Manufactures*, p. clxvi.

<sup>43</sup> William Steinway, "American Musical Instruments," *One Hundred Years of American Commerce*, II, 510-11.

<sup>44</sup> The best source of information on the early history of the clock industry is Chauncey Jerome, *History of the American Clock Business for the Past Sixty Years* (New Haven: F. C. Dayton, Jr., 1860); see also Willis I. Milham, *Time and Timekeepers* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1923), chap. xx.



ware, but the making of white tableware had barely commenced. Most of the tableware was plain white and was defective, poorly decorated, and clumsy in design and shape; only the common earthenware was good. The great bulk of tableware was imported, most of it from England. It took the high tariff of 1861 and the later premium on gold to establish the domestic industry.<sup>45</sup>

Enoch Robinson in 1827 invented a machine for making pressed glassware, which made it possible to make pleasing and suitable glassware even cheaper than Staffordshire wares. By 1845 most of the upper- and middle-class homes were using pressed glass, and by 1860 a considerable number of colors were available in it. Up to the discovery in 1864 of a successful formula for making lime glass, tableware was made of flint or lead glass, better than lime glass but three or four times as expensive. By 1860 the glass companies were making every conceivable variety of glassware, but there is nothing to show that the beautiful pieces now prized by collectors were ever very generally in use by the common people.<sup>46</sup>

It was not until about 1840 that the possibilities in electroplating ordinary silverware and the like were realized. After that date new processes were developed and silver-plating was rapidly introduced from Philadelphia into New England.<sup>47</sup> The industry seems to have been flourishing by 1849, though it required skilled labor and remained small scale in its organization.<sup>48</sup> By the sixties, if not earlier, Reed and Barton had large factories and showrooms at Taunton, Massachusetts, and were producing Britannia and silver-plated wares and Albata spoons

<sup>45</sup> John Moses, "American Potteries," *One Hundred Years of American Commerce*, I, 289-92; Herman John Stratton, "Factors in the Development of the American Pottery Industry" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Department of Economics, University of Chicago, 1929), pp. 5-6, 10, 27, 59, 301, and 310.

<sup>46</sup> Rhea Mansfield Knittle, *Early American Glass* (New York: Century Co., 1927), pp. 264-67; Lura Woodside Watkins, *Cambridge Glass, 1818 to 1888* (Boston: Marshall Jones Co., 1930). There is a list of manufactures in N. Hudson Moore, *Old Glass: European and American* (New York: Tudor Pub. Co., 1935), pp. 369-82.

<sup>47</sup> Bolles, p. 535; Clark, I, 257; Freedley, *Philadelphia* (1867 ed.), p. 415.

<sup>48</sup> Philip L. Sniffin, *A Century of Silver Smithing* (Taunton, Mass.: Reed & Barton, 1924), pp. 26-27.

and forks. They employed about five hundred men.<sup>49</sup> A number of manufacturers were turning out tea sets, plate service, and other electroplated ware in the fifties. *Godey's Lady's Book* offered to supply its readers with patent india-rubber-handled table knives at \$5.50 a dozen, table forks at \$4.50, dessert knives at \$5.00, and dessert forks at \$4.25; a steel carving set was \$3.25; a salad spoon and fork, \$1.50.<sup>50</sup> Pewter-making had dwindled into insignificance.

*Mrs. Putnam's Receipt Book* listed as the requisites of any well-equipped kitchen the range and its equipment, copper saucepans with covers, a flat-bottomed soup pot, an upright gridiron, sheet-iron bread pans, a griddle, a "tin kitchen," a double boiler, a coffee pot, a bread board and knife, tin pans, stone jars for preserves and the like, storage boxes for various sorts of foodstuffs, a meat saw and cleaver, sieves, a mortar, and a rolling pin.<sup>51</sup> The double boiler was a comparatively recent innovation, apparently dating from not earlier than the forties. Another was the rotary egg beater—previously cream had to be whipped and eggs beaten with a three-tined fork. There were various other ingenious kitchen conveniences, such as apple-paring machines and slicers. Corn brooms were being turned out by the millions, selling at from \$1.00 to \$3.00 a dozen wholesale, or 25 cents or so each retail.

*Houses then and now.*—Such were the houses that could be built in 1860. The years have shown how well constructed, how durable, they were. We can criticize them for running too much to bell towers, "columnettes," and other oddities of design and for the overelaborateness of their Victorian interiors, but there is little fault to find with their construction. They could be furnace heated, and their bathrooms could be complete with hot and cold running water, tub and shower baths, and water closets. The furniture was well made, the floor coverings serviceable, and the wallpaper decorative. Really good china, glassware, and silver were too expensive for any except the very

<sup>49</sup> J. L. Bishop, III, 330.

<sup>50</sup> *Godey's Lady's Book*, LVIII (1859), 471.

<sup>51</sup> P. 219.

well-to-do, but probably no one regarded this as a very important matter.

What have the eighty years since that time contributed toward making houses better places to live in? Houses built in the twentieth century show little superiority in durability: indeed, one may question whether they are as well built. We have a wider range of building materials, but in the main (with the possible exception of roofing) continue to use the same old reliables. Exterior designs have changed, though not always in the direction of conspicuous improvement; and the changes in furniture have not all been such as to make the interiors more pleasing. The only fundamental change in housing is the result of a changed sense of values: we now prefer small rooms or even apartments, while in 1860 people were willing to sacrifice other enjoyments in order to have big, roomy houses. The other changes have been mostly additions to the number of "conveniences"—electric lighting, automatic feeders and controls for furnaces, really dependable plumbing, and the long list of labor-saving devices. Perhaps, too, our houses have their rooms and closets more conveniently arranged, and certainly they have more window space.

Much though these improvements add to our ease and comfort, it seems to me that the real progress in housing since 1860 has been not so much the raising of the level of consumption of the well-to-do as making it possible for a greatly increased proportion of the population to approach that level. To appreciate this we have to understand what housing was actually like in 1860—not what was available to the rich but what was actually being used by all classes of society.

## CHAPTER V

### HOUSING AND HOUSEHOLD OPERATION

#### HOUSES IN THE NORTH

*Sectional differences in housing.*—Anyone who reads much of what was being written during this period will receive the impression that the contrasts between the different levels of consumption were much greater for housing than for food. In the main this impression is probably a correct one: the United States was still predominantly agricultural, and insufficiencies of food can hardly have been as great as insufficiencies of industrial products. The contrast seems especially vivid in housing, however, because no one can be altogether unaware of what kind of houses other people live in, however little knowledge he may have of—or interest in—what goes on within those houses. Certainly, in 1860 the contrasts were very great—not only contrasts between the “possibilities” and the “actualities” or between the houses of the rich and those of the poor but contrasts also between the houses of the East and those of the Frontier, even between those of the North and those of the South. It is somewhat startling to read in a recent history:

Four fifths of the people of the United States of 1860 lived in the country, and it is perhaps fair to say that half of these dwelt in log houses of one or two rooms. Comforts such as most of us enjoy daily were as good as unknown. Even in the cities baths were exceedingly rare, while in the country the very decencies of life were neglected. . . . But in the cities and towns there was, of course, a better life. Frame houses, two stories high, painted white and adorned with green window blinds, were everywhere in good form, except where men were able to build brick or stone mansions or maintain the establishments of wealthy ancestors. In the South it was still the custom to guard the entrances to great plantation houses with chiseled lions or crouching greyhounds; in the East more attention was paid to flowers and shrubbery. . . . Liveries and silver plate persisted mainly in the very exclusive circles of Philadelphia and New York, in Washington, and on the great plantations.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup> Dodd, *Expansion and Conflict*, p. 208. If Dodd's statement that half the rural population lived in log houses is true—and I am inclined to think it is somewhat exag-

In the East the presence of native stone made possible the construction of many more stone houses than elsewhere. The crowded cities led to the growth of tenement houses, while the wealthy built luxurious city homes and suburban "villas." In the South the mildness of the climate made it unnecessary to build as ruggedly as in the North, and the conservatism of the planters (and perhaps their lack of cash resources) prevented any experimentation with new styles. The habitations of slaves and "poor whites" differed markedly from the workers' homes in the North. On the Frontier the homes depended upon the length of time the community had been settled and upon the building materials locally available. The first homes in a wooded part of the country were likely to be log cabins, giving place to frame houses; on the treeless plains the pioneers lived first in dugouts or sod houses.

*The homes of the well-to-do.*—In the large eastern cities the homes of the "commercial aristocracy" were frequently built of brick or stone, but most of them were frame dwellings.<sup>2</sup> The period was marked by the advent of the crowded brownstone front, the houses abutting one another, and with iron railings in front. These were three stories high, with English basement. (In Philadelphia marble-trimmed fronts of brick or brownstone were much more common than the plain brownstone of New York.) Such houses were constructed with an eye to saving space and made efficient use of the limited room available.<sup>3</sup>

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gerated—sectional differences must be taken into account. That a large proportion of the inhabitants of the lower South did so live is certainly true, and probably it is only slightly less so of much of the West and even as far east as Ohio. But only a very small percentage of the population of New England and the North Atlantic states lived in log houses (cf. Table 2, p. 120, for New York State).

<sup>2</sup> I cannot be altogether certain on this point. It has been suggested that the fire ordinances of the time—unless enforced only in limited areas of the city—would have led to more building in brick and stone. On the other hand, the figures for Providence (see p. 108) indicate that relatively few houses were of brick or stone; and it seems to be true that in Chicago as late as 1890 the houses were mostly of frame construction.

<sup>3</sup> See p. 85 above. As yet the only originality displayed in American architecture was in response to local economic or climatic conditions: the narrow, space-saving house of the big city; the connected buildings of the New England farm and the detached buildings of the Southern plantation; the long hallway running all the way through southern houses and the verandas around them; and perhaps the omission of the basement in New Orleans.

Rooms in these, as in other homes, were higher and more spacious than in the houses built today. H. Reid, like many visitors from abroad, was favorably impressed:

In the United States [the houses and shop buildings] are so tasteful and elegant, and of such superior material, that it is quite a treat to walk along the streets, which have a highly rich, lively, and variegated appearance, from the variety of stone of which the houses are built, and the variety of beautiful architectural designs which they exhibit. Chestnut and Walnut streets, in Philadelphia; in New York, Broadway, and the streets which run from the lower part of it to the water—Fifth Avenue, and the streets in the vicinity; in Boston, Washington, Hanover, Franklin, and State streets, are perfectly magnificent. I have seen nothing worthy of being compared with them on this side of the Atlantic. The houses or stores are lofty, built of rich red or fawn colored freestone, granite, marble, iron, or brick,—and always with some architectural decoration that pleases the eye, and interests and excites the taste of the observer. . . .

Chestnut Street in Philadelphia is certainly one of the prettiest streets I have ever seen. There is scarcely a plain, common-looking building in its whole length. . . . It is not only in the leading streets, public buildings, and large stores, that this taste for neatness and elegance is manifested in the architecture of Philadelphia; it is seen in the smaller streets and humbler houses in the suburbs; they are of brick, but with marble steps at the door, and a marble casement, which relieve the monotony of the flat surface, and give a lively, tasteful aspect to the street. The Quaker City is truly un-quaker-like, but looks, more almost than any city I have seen, bright, cheerful, and elegant. But let the visitor avoid the suburbs on a Saturday morning; then Philadelphia is cleansing itself. This it does with characteristic American energy, and there is such scrubbing, washing, and splashing at the door of every house, that it is best to be out of the way.<sup>4</sup>

While it was the dwellings of brick and stone that attracted attention, even in New England cities by far the greater number of houses were wood. This is shown by Dr. E. M. Snow's census of Providence in 1855: of 5,740 houses, 5,544 were wood, 169 brick, and 27 stone.<sup>5</sup> Although Boston had many granite houses (the quarries of near-by Quincy supplied the material), there were more of brick than of granite.<sup>6</sup> Reid found even the

<sup>4</sup> *Sketches in North America* (London: Longman, Green, Longman, & Roberts, 1861), pp. 223-25.

<sup>5</sup> Cited in *Hunt's Merchants' Magazine*, XXXIV (1856), 670.

<sup>6</sup> Phillippo, p. 257. Again the comments of travelers from abroad are so revealing that I cannot forbear further quotation. Edward Dacey wrote: "Out of the city itself the houses, with few exceptions, are built of wood. Stone is more plentiful there than timber; in fact the whole State of Massachusetts is little more than a great granite boulder covered over with a thin layer of scanty soil. Wood, however, is preferred for

smaller towns of New England clean, tasteful, and cheerful in aspect. The suburban villages near such towns as Fall River and New Haven were "singularly pleasant."<sup>7</sup>

The houses of the wealthy in New York were substantially built of brick or brown sandstone or of brick faced with marble. Some critics thought them so uniform as to be depressing. There was considerable uniformity in their interior construction, too: the drawing-room, library, and dining-room were on the principal floor, the bedrooms and nursery upstairs.<sup>8</sup> In the early fifties there were three or four thousand of these brown-stone houses in New York,<sup>9</sup> and their steady march up Fifth Avenue was a feature of the fifties. It seemed to Chambers that north of the busy part of the city all the buildings were built entirely of brown sandstone, richly decorated, with plate-glass windows, silvered door handles, silver plates at the doors, and bell pulls. The interiors and furnishings were "superb."<sup>10</sup> William Howard Russell described these Fifth Avenue houses:

Some of the houses are handsome, but the greater number have a compressed, squeezed-up aspect, which arises from the compulsory narrowness of frontage in proportion to the height of the building, and all of them are bright and new, as if they were just finished to order,—a most astonishing proof of the rapid development of the city. As the hall door is made an important feature of the residence, the front parlour is generally a narrow, lanky apartment, struggling for existence between the hall and the partition of the next

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house-building, partly because a wooden house requires less labour in construction, and labour is expensive and far from plentiful, partly because wooden dwellings dry more quickly, and are more habitable than stone ones" (*Six Months in the Federal States* [London: Macmillan & Co., 1863], II, 177).

<sup>7</sup> Reid, p. 227; cf. Downing's comment: "New Haven abounds with tasteful residences. 'Hillhouse Avenue,' in particular, is remarkable for a neat display of Tuscan or Italian Suburban Villas" (*Treatise on the Theory and Practice of Landscape Gardening* [6th ed.; New York: A. O. Moore & Co., 1859], p. 336 n.). The preoccupation with picturesque European styles of architecture is again to be noted.

<sup>8</sup> Phillippo, p. 271; Pulszky, I, 70-71; Sala, I, 78-79. Cf. also the comments of Dicey (I, 12), who was impressed by the display of wealth but thought the houses showed little taste.

<sup>9</sup> If Isabella Bird Bishop (pp. 355-57) is to be believed. Her description of the mansions of the very wealthy (pp. 358-60) is of some interest.

<sup>10</sup> Chambers, p. 178. Edith Wharton, in "A Little Girl's New York" (*Harper's Magazine*, CLXXVI [1938], 356-64), has described the brownstone houses as they were in the late seventies, and her description applies, in the main, to the fifties as well.

house. The outer door, which is always provided with fine carved panels and mouldings, is of some rich varnished wood, and looks much better than our painted doors. It is generously thrown open so as to show an inner door with curtains and plate glass. The windows, which are double on account of the climate, are frequently of plate glass also. Some of the doors are on the same level as the street, with a basement story beneath; others are approached by flights of steps, the basement for servants having the entrance below the steps, and this, I believe, is the old Dutch fashion, and the name of "stoop" is still retained for it.<sup>11</sup>

Visitors all carried away from Philadelphia the impression of a city whose houses were so uniform as to be monotonous.<sup>12</sup> All seemed to be of red brick, faced with marble, with white shutters at the plate-glass windows, some with green Venetian blinds over the upper-story windows. Almost all of them had the white-marble doorsteps and silver knockers—"prim, dull, and respectable."

There was no uniformity about the residences in Chicago, then in the transition from village to metropolis and having a little the character of each.<sup>13</sup> Sophisticated visitors found little pleasing in it. But there were a "few pleasant residences on Michigan Avenue fronting the encroaching lake, and on Wabash Avenue";<sup>14</sup> and in 1854 Robert Russell had noted handsome sandstone villas in the lake-shore suburbs.<sup>15</sup> A local statistical summary had an imposing report on the expensive houses of

<sup>11</sup> Pp. 12-13; cf. Baxter, p. 28.

<sup>12</sup> Chambers, p. 306; Mackay, pp. 72-74; Amelia Murray, p. 160; Phillippo, p. 285; Tallack, p. 85.

<sup>13</sup> Along Michigan and Wabash Avenues wealthy Chicagoans were, in the fifties, building new and expensive residences; other were moving farther into the South Division, and a few were moving into the northern part of the city. Alongside these sections were workmen's cottages, uninteresting in design and uniform in appearance, with vegetable gardens and barns. Adjacent to these were the insanitary, ramshackle houses of the poor: in the mid-fifties there were cabins in the West Division, some of them only ten feet by sixteen, sheltering families with five or more children, a dog, a cat, pigs, chickens, and a cow (Pierce, II, 476).

<sup>14</sup> Charles Dudley Warner, *Studies in the South and West with Comments on Canada* (Hartford: American Pub. Co., 1905), pp. 194-95.

<sup>15</sup> P. 108. C. M. Kirkland also wrote that the vicinity was all dotted with villa-residences, many of the local light-colored stone ("Illinois in Springtime: With a Look at Chicago," *Atlantic Monthly*, II [1858], 487).



brick, marble, and frame construction going up.<sup>16</sup> There were luxurious houses in the other cities and towns of the West, too. James Caird found many handsome private residences in Milwaukee, some of them of white marble;<sup>17</sup> and Dana called it "finely built," considering how young a city it was, because of the fine quality of clay it had for brickmaking.<sup>18</sup> Even in Madison there were clean, white houses, some Gothic, some Grecian.<sup>19</sup> And "you never see in England a High-street like the Main street of Racine, but each single house might stand in an English street without attracting especial attention."<sup>20</sup> St. Louis was older, and there had been a longer time for wealth to accumulate. Of it Dicey wrote:

You may ride for miles and miles in the suburbs, through rows of handsome private dwelling-houses, the occupiers of which in England (where, on the whole, living is cheaper than in America) could not possess less than 500 £ to 1,000 £ a year. All the private houses are detached, two stories high, and built of Dutch-looking brick. The door stands in the middle of the house, not on one side, and the windows are high, narrow, and numerous, as in our own houses of the ante-Pitt era. In all Western cities, the streets are so broad, and the houses so frequently detached, standing in their own plots of ground, that a Western city of one hundred thousand inhabitants covers perhaps three times the space it would in Europe. There may be poverty at St. Louis, but there is no poor, densely-populated quarter.<sup>21</sup>

The newer parts of St. Louis were being built up, largely in brick, but with some use of local limestone. Many of its residences were "costly and beautiful."<sup>22</sup>

Whether it was altogether because of lack of wealth or whether lack of "progressiveness" had something to do with it, there is no question that few houses had such conveniences as hot and cold running water, water closets, and baths. Boston, with a population of 177,840 in 1860, had only 31,098 sinks, 3,910 bathtubs, and 9,864 water closets (of which about half

<sup>16</sup> *Fifth Annual Review of the Commerce, Manufactures, and the Public and Private Improvements of Chicago* (Chicago: D. B. Cooke & Co., 1857), pp. 10-15.

<sup>17</sup> *Prairie Farming in America* (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1859), p. 98.

<sup>18</sup> C. W. Dana, *The Great West* (Boston: Wentworth & Co., 1857), p. 140.

<sup>19</sup> Phillippo, p. 127.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*, 98-99.

<sup>20</sup> Dicey, II, 126.

<sup>22</sup> Dana, p. 174.

were of the unsatisfactory pan type); there were 10,141 lavatories, but only 13 shower baths. It was estimated that Charlestown, Massachusetts, with a population of over 25,000, had only 300 tubs and water closets. New York City, with a population of 629,904 in 1855, had in 1856 only 1,361 baths and 10,384 water closets. (These figures provide a useful check on the reckless statements of contemporaries: Batcheler wrote that the businessmen of the city all had hot and cold baths, as well as dumbwaiters and speaking-tubes). Albany, whose population in 1860 was 62,367, had in 1859 only 19 private baths and 160 water closets. Philadelphia had the reputation among travelers of being the most cleanly of American cities. As early as 1849 there were 3,521 baths in what was then the city proper (not including the suburbs incorporated in the city in 1854), and in the newer houses of the well-to-do baths were coming to be standard equipment.<sup>23</sup> The average Chicagoan had not even lake water, but still used the pump in the back yard. The editor of the *Chicago Tribune* in 1861 called attention to the fact that many lived in houses "entirely innocent of plumbers' work" and

<sup>23</sup> Most of these figures come from reports of city water departments, where they appear because baths and water closets were charged for in addition to the normal water rates—itsself a suggestive fact. (There is, of course, at least a possibility that there were baths and water closets not connected with the city water systems.) Boston, Cochituate Water Board, *Annual Report for the Year 1860* (Boston: Rand & Avery, 1861), p. 29; George R. Baldwin and Charles L. Stevenson, *Report on Supplying the City of Charlestown with Pure Water* (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1860), p. 62; New York City, Croton Aqueduct Department, *Annual Report January 5, 1857* (New York: Baker, 1857), pp. 106-7; Albany Department of Public Works, Bureau of Water, *Annual Report for the Year 1858* (Albany: Weed, Parsons & Co., 1859), pp. 39-40. The Philadelphia figure is from the American Medical Association's Committee on Public Hygiene, *First Report, with an Appendix Containing Sketches of the Sanitary Condition of the Cities of Concord, Portland, New York, Philadelphia, Boston, Lowell, Baltimore, Charleston, New Orleans, Louisville, and Cincinnati* (extract from the *Transactions of the American Medical Association* [Philadelphia: T. K. and P. G. Collins, 1849]), pp. 478-79. I have been unable to find any figure for a year closer to 1860. Population figures are from the *Eighth Census* except that for New York City, which is from the *Census of the State of New York for the Year 1855*, p. 8. Batcheler's comment is on p. 63 of his book.

The belief that people in that period were actually afraid to bathe frequently has occasionally been challenged, but I think there is some truth in it. *Godey's Lady's Book* (LX [May, 1860], 464) summarized with the approval an article from *Hall's Journal of Health*: bathing in the evening was discouraged, but to bathe in the morning, briefly, and not oftener than once a week, was all right.

that there were many for whom "no plated faucets" suggested "hot" and "cold" at will."<sup>24</sup>

To what extent coal was used for heating it is impossible to say. As we have seen, the total consumption of coal in the country as a whole was only about half a ton a year per capita for both home and industrial use; I think we must be rather cautious in accepting contemporary statements that it was commonly used.<sup>25</sup> But Pairpont's comment that New York's atmosphere was clear because anthracite was generally used<sup>26</sup> and George Derby's statement in 1868 that ninety-nine out of a hundred Boston dwellings were warmed in whole or in part by anthracite burned in iron stoves<sup>27</sup> must, even allowing for exaggeration, indicate that at least among people of means in those cities heating with coal was an accepted thing. It was reported, as early as 1849, that in Cincinnati the wealthy burned stone coal in grates or used cellar furnaces.<sup>28</sup> A large number of the new houses were being designed for furnace heating; and European travelers frequently complained of the stuffiness of American homes, overheated with furnaces and poorly ventilated.<sup>29</sup>

<sup>24</sup> Pierce, II, 333.

<sup>25</sup> Retail coal prices ranged from about \$1.50 a ton in mining regions to \$5.00 or \$6.00 in New England; cord wood might sell at from \$1.00 up to more than \$6.00 a cord, depending upon the region (Appen. D, Tables 37-38). Coal for domestic use sold for \$5.50 a ton in Boston, January 1, 1860 (*Boston Evening Transcript*). Wyoming Valley coal sold for \$5.00 a ton in New York (*New York Daily Tribune*, January 16, 1860). Wood sold for \$6.50 a cord and coal for \$6.50 a ton on the Illinois prairies (*Harper's Weekly*, I [January 31, 1857], 78). Wood sold for \$3.50 a cord and coal for \$7.00 a ton in Iowa (Nathan H. Parker, *The Iowa Handbook for 1856* [Boston: John P. Jewett & Co., 1856], p. 65).

<sup>26</sup> P. 25. Burns also commented on the widespread use of hard coal (p. 51), and Isabella Bird Bishop wrote that anthracite was almost universally used in New York (p. 336).

<sup>27</sup> *An Inquiry into the Influence upon Health of Anthracite Coal when Used as Fuel for Warming Dwelling Houses* (Boston: A. Williams & Co., 1868), p. 6.

<sup>28</sup> American Medical Association, Committee on Public Hygiene, p. 620; cf. also Charles Cist: "Wood, except for cooking purposes, is fuel here no longer," p. 349.

<sup>29</sup> E.g., Batcheler, p. 63; M. Willson Disher (ed.), *The Cowells in America* (London: Oxford University Press, 1934), p. 3; Gratton, I, 105-6; Pulszky, I, 265. Cf. John Gregory: "Few of the houses in this country have fire-places, the stove having almost banished them altogether. I consider the American stove, fed to fullness with dry hickory or maple, and confined in a room without a breath of ventilation, to be the greatest

Some public buildings had been equipped with ventilating systems, and plans for new houses usually included provision for ventilation of a sort; but real ventilation was not to come until much later.

Gratton, who probably saw only the homes of the upper class, and those only in the Northeast, wrote that tallow candles were never seen. Lamp oil was cheap; and astral, solar, moderator, and other kinds of lamps were used; there were gas lamps and wax or spermaceti lights. A "strange and disagreeable looking lamp," made of glass in the shape of an urn, was common in the best houses; the wick could be seen inside coiled up in oil and, passing upward through a small tin tube, it burned without a covering. These were the common bedroom lights, and one or more, very large and lofty, stood in every drawing-room.<sup>30</sup> It is difficult to form any opinion about the use of gas for lighting houses. Every northern community of any size had its gas company, the rates usually ranging from \$2.00 to \$4.00 a thousand cubic feet. Philadelphia's had more than 41,000 customers.<sup>31</sup> But it seems unlikely that any large proportion of the population used gas for lighting.

I have been able to find very little useful information about the furnishings and household equipment of any class of society; apparently the only writers who have been interested were interested only in the antiquarian aspects.<sup>32</sup> Even the well-to-do used only soft woods for floors; these floors were completely covered by carpeting, and occasionally there were small

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enemy to man, cat or dog confined with it, that can be imagined" (*Industrial Resources of Wisconsin* [Milwaukee: Starr's Book & Job Printing Office, 1855], p. 254).

<sup>30</sup> Gratton, I, 106.

<sup>31</sup> For information about rates and service see McMillin, pp. 296-97; and J. W. Watson, "Gas and Gas-making," *Harper's Magazine*, XXVI (1862), 14-28. Other rates are quoted in *Hunt's Merchants' Magazine*, XXXI (1854), 224.

Coal oil sold at prices ranging from 30 cents a gallon in New Cumberland, [West] Virginia, to \$1.00 a gallon in Connecticut cities (*Tenth Census of the United States*, XX, 103). Retail prices of burning oils and fluids averaged a little more than \$1.00 a gallon in Massachusetts, ranging from about 70 cents up to \$1.50 a gallon (Massachusetts, Bureau of Labor and Industries, *Annual Report for the Year 1885*, pp. 407 and 449).

<sup>32</sup> See above, pp. 97 ff., for a summary of contemporary fashions in interior decoration.

rugs in addition.<sup>33</sup> But no large rugs like those now in common use could be manufactured, and if there were any oriental rugs they were very rare indeed. I think it is safe to assume that the furniture in the homes of the well-to-do—period furniture for the very wealthy, Victorian (hardly then to be regarded as “period” furniture) for those in moderate circumstances—was probably good and that there were pianos,<sup>34</sup> clocks, window curtains, and probably draperies in most of these homes. Only the very wealthy can have had imported chinaware and solid silver. Almost certainly there were family portraits and oil paintings, originals or copies, on the walls. The whole question of furniture and furnishings needs more study before any more significant generalizations can be made.

These houses were city houses. Some of the wealthy built suburban homes or country residences. These ranged from unpretentious Elizabethan cottages to elaborate and luxurious villas. Following the leadership of Downing and a few others, they were coming to be carefully landscaped, and they had, as far as possible, the conveniences of city homes (water, for instance, might be pumped from well or spring to a reservoir high enough to give pressure). The interiors were finished in keeping with the style and grandeur of the exterior. Robert Everest was impressed by Jamaica Plains, just outside Boston, where the wealthy had their villas, each in a wooded “park.” Some of the villas were stone, some wood, and most were imitations of Swiss or Elizabethan styles.<sup>35</sup> Close to New York, Westchester was a region of “country-seats,” where there were no poor people whose more humble dwellings might mar the landscape. “Miles and miles of unmitigated prosperity weary the eye. Lawns and park-gates, groves and verandahs, ornamental woods and neat

<sup>33</sup> Imported carpetings sold for from about \$1.00 a yard up to perhaps \$2.00; domestic carpets sold at from 25 cents up to \$1.00 or so, averaging about 40 cents a yard. I have found no information on rug prices, which may indicate that they were not very commonly sold.

<sup>34</sup> The average value (at factory) of pianos was about \$240 (*Eighth Census: Manufactures*, p. clxvi).

<sup>35</sup> Robert Everest, *A Journey through the United States and Part of Canada* (London: John Chapman, 1855), p. 29.

walls, trim hedges and well-placed shrubberies, fine houses and large stables, neat gravel-walks and nobody on them.”<sup>36</sup>

There can have been but few of the very wealthy; and if there were enough information it would be interesting to compare their houses with those of the much greater number of businessmen, retired farmers, and others who would still have been considered (by the poor, at least) well-to-do. From New England to Illinois the homes of this latter class seem to have been much alike. The house usually consisted of a parlor or sitting-room, or, rarely, of both, a kitchen, enough bedrooms for the family and any hired help, and a spare room for guests—who were likely to be frequent. (The parlor was usually kept closed and the shades drawn.) The house was probably heated by wood stoves, all of which except the kitchen range were set up in the fall and taken down in the spring. The range warmed the kitchen, and the sitting-room—the family gathering place—had its own heating stove. Sometimes one bedroom would have a small stove, but usually there were only the two. Candles were still much used for lighting, but lamps were becoming more frequent, especially in the East. The kitchen or sitting-room was used also as a dining-room, and both kitchen and dining-room chairs were plain in style.<sup>37</sup> The sitting-room floor was usually covered with a rag carpet, frequently with a layer of straw under it. Mottoes, framed certificates, and the like were frequent decorations, supplementing the steel or wood engravings and the chromos. On its special shelf there was an upright wooden-case clock, and sometimes in the sitting-room a combined bookcase and writing desk of black walnut, having a drawer below and three or four bookshelves above. Occasionally there was an organ, and some of the more aristocratic parlors had pianos.<sup>38</sup>

<sup>36</sup>Nathaniel Parker Willis, *Hurry-Graphs; or Sketches of Scenery, Celebrities, and Society, Taken from Life* (Auburn: Alden, Beardsley & Co., 1853), p. 130.

<sup>37</sup>In 1860 the wholesale price of cane-seated maple bedroom chairs was \$8.00 a dozen, of kitchen chairs \$4.50 a dozen, and of pine kitchen tables (three feet, six inches) \$12.00 a dozen (*Aldrich Report*, II, 274-76).

<sup>38</sup>Lincoln's Springfield house was probably better than the typical home of downstate Illinois—it was referred to by *Leslie's Weekly* in December, 1864, as “indicative

*Rural homes.*—All travelers into rural New England carried away the impression of villages very much alike, each one containing rows of neat detached frame houses, with porches, painted white except for the green of the shutters, surrounded by small flower beds, sometimes by vines and rosebushes, and with trees in front. The interiors, like the exteriors, were clean and neat.<sup>39</sup> One such village Quincy, Massachusetts, had been, though it was changing in the fifties:

Up to as late as 1850 Quincy was practically what it had always been—a quiet, steady-going, rural Massachusetts community, with its monotonous main thoroughfares and commonplace connecting streets, both thoroughfares and byways lined with wooden houses, wholly innocent of any attempts at architecture, and all painted white with window blinds of green.<sup>40</sup>

The New England farm, because it was likely to be snow-bound long months each winter, had its own traditional method of building:

Northern rural communities constructed their houses with a string of sheds or barns trailing out behind the kitchen. Doors, connecting each unit with whatever preceded or followed, insured the owner's being able to reach and care for all live stock even in the most inclement weather. But an un-deviating rule was followed—the cattle were a long way from the kitchen.

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of the well-to-do country lawyer or retired farmer" (Sandburg, *Abraham Lincoln: The War Years* [New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1939], IV, 122). It had been built in 1839 and purchased by Lincoln in 1844 for \$1,500. It was a story-and-a-half frame house, with kitchen, living-room, and two bedrooms on the first floor, and two low rooms beneath the roof; the privy and stable were in the back yard. In the parlor "early Victorian" furniture was set about in a square and uniform pattern. In 1856 or 1857 the house was raised to a full second story for an additional \$1,300. (For pictures of the interior, typical of the period, see "Mr. Lincoln's House," *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, XI [March 9, 1861], 245. A reproduction in miniature is also one of the Thorne collection in the Chicago Art Institute.)

<sup>39</sup> See, e.g., Baxter, p. 24; Isabella Bishop, p. 95; Chambers, pp. 50, 211; and Robert Russell, pp. 6-7.

<sup>40</sup> Charles Francis Adams, *Charles Francis Adams, 1835-1915* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1916), p. 227. Cf. Dicey's description of such villages. "I passed through villages without end; and yet I never saw a cottage about which there was the unmistakable stamp of want. It is true that white paint conceals a great deal of dirt, but still I saw no single cottage in which I should think it a hardship to have to live. Many of them had gardens, where wild vines and honeysuckles and roses were trained carefully. Through the windows you could see sofas, and rocking-chairs, and books, and lamps—all signs evidencing some degree of wealth, or at least of comfort. The poorest cottages were always those of the raw Irish emigrants, but still there was hardly one of them which was not a palace compared with the cottage of an ordinary English labourer, to say nothing of Ireland" (II, 178-79).

First, next the kitchen, came the "buttery," so called in New England, lined with wide shelves to hold flat crocks of milk waiting for the cream to raise; then came the woodshed, full to bursting; next, the work-shop, where on winter days laid by repairs for the whole year were made; adjoining the work-shop, usually, was the tool-shed, in which farm implements were kept together with the family conveyances; the granary followed, with bins for oats and corn; and not till then came the barns for horses, cows, sheep, pigs and fowls—with the Big Barn last of all, its heavy-timbered mows stored with hay and straw and running over with stolen hen's nests, rustling mice and litter on litter of half-wild, scampering kittens.<sup>41</sup>

Perhaps our impressions of New England farmhouses and farm life fail to take sufficiently into account their less attractive characteristics. A contemporary described the typical New England farmhouse as

a square brown house; a chimney coming out of the middle of a roof; not a tree nearer than the orchard; and not a flower at the door. At one end projects a kitchen; from the kitchen projects a wood-shed and wagon-cover, occupied at night by hens; beyond the woodshed, a hog-pen, fragrant and musical. . . .

We enter the house at the back door, and find the family at dinner in the kitchen. A kettle of soap grease is stewing upon the stove, and the fumes of this, mingled with those that were generated by boiling the cabbage which we see upon the table, and by perspiring men in shirtsleeves, and by boots that have forgotten or do not care where they have been, make the air anything but agreeable to those who are not accustomed to it. This is the place where the family live. They cook everything here for themselves and their hogs. They eat every meal here. They sit here every evening, and here they receive their friends. The women in the kitchen toil incessantly, from the time they rise in the morning until they go to bed at night. Here men and women, sons and daughters, live, in the belief that work is the great thing, that efficiency in work is the crowning excellence of manhood and womanhood, and willingly go so far into essential self-debasement, sometimes, as to contemn beauty and those who love it, and to glory above all things in brute strength and brute endurance.<sup>42</sup>

Throughout the Middle states and into the Old Northwest the rural and small-town homes were one-and-a-half- or two-and-a-half-story frame houses, having usually from five to seven rooms and attic. The prevalence of the Gothic (or "Elizabethan") fashion had resulted in the construction of many frame

<sup>41</sup> Finley, p. 139.

<sup>42</sup> N. G. Holland, "Farming Life in New England," *Atlantic Monthly*, II (1858), 334-41.



dwellings, steep roofed and high gabled, with cheap Gothic ornaments, gables, pointed windows, verge boards, and the like, although most communities were crowded with the simplest form of boxlike frame houses. The character and location of the community had much to do with the appearance of its homes—Downing pointed out that in rural New York the houses were cheaply made and likely to be falling to pieces, the villages without trees, the streets overrun with pigs, while in Massachusetts the villages had broad streets lined with maples and elms and rows of neat and substantial dwellings, “evidencing order, comfort, and taste.”<sup>43</sup> In Pennsylvania the German farmers usually lived in “stone dwelling houses, well cemented.”<sup>44</sup> It was still customary in the Middle states to have the kitchen in the basement, though sometimes it was on the principal floor, perhaps in a separate wing. Few farmhouses had a separate dining-room, and either the kitchen or the sitting-room—more often the kitchen—served also as dining-room.

There were regions even in New York and Pennsylvania which looked more like the Frontier than like parts of states long settled. The New York census of 1865 gives evidence of the use of thousands of log cabins in the fifties and sixties (see Table 2); and David Humphrey wrote, describing western Pennsylvania, in a letter dated May 17, 1856: “The ‘right smart sprinkling’ of log cabins looked like a new country, as it is.”<sup>45</sup> The census data is both comprehensive and quantitative; it offers a healthy antidote to such travelers’ accounts as give the impression of universal farm prosperity. Out in Illinois many lived in temporary houses, to be replaced as soon as possible.<sup>46</sup>

Again, it is impossible to be very definite about what these

<sup>43</sup> Downing, *Rural Essays*, pp. 237–38.

<sup>44</sup> Johann G. Kohl, *Travels in Canada and through the States of New York and Pennsylvania*, trans. Mrs. Percy Sinnet (London: George Manwaring, 1861), II, 327.

<sup>45</sup> Seth K. Humphrey, *Following the Prairie Frontier* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1931), p. 4.

<sup>46</sup> Kirkland, *Atlantic Monthly*, II, 481. The rest of the cottages, seen from the train window, were pretty and well planned, apparently nicely furnished inside.

rural cottages and farmhouses were like on the inside. Probably few had sinks inside the house, and fewer still had running water, piped from a spring on the hillside. The toilets were outside privies, and bathing had to be done in washtubs or basins. Apparently, at least in the Northeast, most rural homes were heated by stoves; if there was no heating stove, at least there was the iron range or cookstove to help in heating the house. Lighting was by homemade candles or at best by whale-oil or camphene lamps. Probably in most of the cottages the walls

TABLE 2\*

TYPES OF DWELLING HOUSE, NEW YORK STATE, 1855 AND 1865

MATERIAL	NUMBER		PERCENTAGE		AVERAGE VALUE	
	1855	1865	1855	1865	1855	1865
Stone . . . . .	7,536	10,474	1.44	1.76	\$6,997	\$10,315
Brick . . . . .	57,450	74,691	10.97	12.57	5,500	6,171
Frame . . . . .	397,638	459,233	76.49	77.36	785	869
Logs . . . . .	33,092	20,245	6.35	3.41	46	56
Other . . . . .	22,240	28,767	4.25	4.84	234	566
Not specified .	4,369	605	0.50	0.06	9	1,661
Total . . .	522,325	594,045	100.00	100.00	\$1,351	\$ 1,644

\* Source: *Census of the State of New York for the Year 1865*, p. ci.

were whitewashed, though some may have been painted, others papered. There seems to have been, even among the poor and rural classes, a considerable use of rugs made of carpeting and of rag rugs in the principal rooms; there was also some use of matting.<sup>47</sup> That there were roller blinds at many of the windows I am inclined to doubt; but probably in a good many, if not most, farm homes the women would see to it that there were curtains of some sort.<sup>48</sup>

<sup>47</sup> Cole and Williamson, pp. 81 and 100.<sup>48</sup> "An annual rent of from twenty-five to a hundred dollars, these are the country rates, entitles him to the benefit of the improvements of centuries, spacious apartments, clean paint and paper, Rumford fireplace, back plastering, Venetian blinds, copper pump, spring lock, a commodious cellar, and many other things. . . . An average house in this neighborhood costs perhaps eight hundred dollars, and to lay up this sum will take

*Homes of the working classes.*<sup>49</sup>—Brick and stone were too expensive for the laboring population—when they had their own homes they were sure to be frame. I have found no reason to believe that these houses were, in general appearance, greatly dissimilar from those occupied by the same segment of the population during the first years of the present century. I do suspect, however, that they were much less pleasing than we would at first believe from the accounts of contemporaries—who were probably mentally comparing them with workers' houses abroad. In New Haven, H. Reid admired the workmen's cottages, set off by gardens and neat and comfortable looking.<sup>50</sup> A Concord, New Hampshire, physician reported that in his city the usual dwelling was a one-family, two-story frame house;<sup>51</sup> and probably everywhere except in the large industrial cities the one-family, free-standing house was the rule. Of Milwaukee a contemporary chronicler wrote that there were "few if any tenement houses. . . . Mechanics and laboring men can always find a desirable cottage of one story, tastily surrounded by a garden, and furnished with all the conveniences of more expensive mansions, which can be rented for a moderate sum."<sup>52</sup>

Once again I shall have to be very vague in saying anything about the interiors of these houses. None of them, I feel sure,

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from ten to fifteen years of the laborer's life, even if he is not encumbered with a family—estimating the pecuniary value of every man's labor at one dollar a day, for if some receive more, others receive less—so that he must have spent more than half his life commonly before *his* wigwam will be earned" (Thoreau, *Walden*, pp. 33-34). (Thoreau goes on to say that farmers had to work twenty to forty years to pay for their farms and that the assessors could not name a dozen in Concord who owned their farms clear of debt.)

<sup>49</sup> Especially in the industrial towns and cities many lived in tenement houses and boarding-houses; for these accommodations see chap. vi.

<sup>50</sup> P. 227. (In current British usage "garden" meant "yard" rather than a flower or vegetable garden.)

<sup>51</sup> American Medical Association, Committee on Public Hygiene, p. 446.

<sup>52</sup> A. C. Wheeler, *The Chronicles of Milwaukee* (Milwaukee: Jermain & Brightman, 1861), p. 276; cf. Dicey's comment on St. Louis (above, p. 111). However, just outside St. Louis the Countess Pulszky had observed squatters—mostly free Negroes—living in log cabins (II, 183).

There was a great variation in rents, depending upon the type of house and the city in which it was located; for New England and the Middle states the average seems to have been around \$4.50 a month for a four-room house, \$6.00 a month for a six-room house (see Appen. D, Tables 33-34).

had bathtubs or inside toilets; some houses lacked even an outside privy.<sup>53</sup> Many, if not most, were heated by stoves, but probably no great proportion of them had a heating stove in the sitting-room as a supplement to the kitchen range, and almost none had heated bedrooms.<sup>54</sup> There was no ventilation except by doors and windows; and, since every effort must have been made to conserve heat, the atmosphere must have been very stuffy indeed. Whether very many of the working class felt they could afford oil or camphene lamps I don't know; certainly a great many of them still burned candles.<sup>55</sup> But glass was fairly cheap,<sup>56</sup> and its use must have been common even among this part of the population. Carpetings and matting could be obtained for 25 or 30 cents a yard; these and rag rugs constituted the floor coverings where there were any (and foreigners were surprised at how commonly there were such floor coverings).<sup>57</sup> There is nothing to show whether many of these houses had their walls papered, but probably most of them had bare, or at best whitewashed, walls; they may, however, have been decorated with cheap lithographs and prints. The furniture, we can assume, was factory-made, of the cheapest sort, and in the very poorest homes homemade from boxes and boards. Melodeons, although some models could be purchased for less than \$50, were in the luxury class. The tableware consisted of plain porcelain or of an inferior grade of crockery, and plain tumblers;<sup>58</sup> some families may have been able to afford knives, forks, and spoons of silver plate.

<sup>53</sup> Cf. American Medical Association, Committee on Public Hygiene, pp. 499-500, for conditions in Boston.

<sup>54</sup> In Concord, New Hampshire, the homes were most of them warmed by closed stoves; in Portland, Maine, by wood or coal stoves; in Cincinnati by coal stoves or grates or wood stoves (*ibid.*, pp. 446, 452, 620).

<sup>55</sup> V. S. Clark says that, in most of the country, people still used homemade candles for most of their lighting (I, 494).

<sup>56</sup> Wholesale prices of window glass in 1860 were as low as \$1.63 $\frac{1}{4}$  for fifty feet (American thirds); French firsts cost \$3.20 (*Aldrich Report*, II, 241-43). Fifty feet would be the equivalent of, say, 150 six-by-eight-inch panes or 51 ten-by-fourteen-inch panes.

<sup>57</sup> Miss Kyrk calls my attention to the fact that Carroll D. Wright's study of housing conditions in Massachusetts in 1875 showed that even as late as that 48 per cent of the houses had no carpeted room and that only 11 per cent had a piano or organ.

<sup>58</sup> The average retail price of drinking tumblers in Massachusetts, 1851-60, was just under \$1.00 a dozen, though in the latter half of the decade the usual price paid seems to

We must not conclude, however, that all the working class, except for the tenement population, lived as well as this. There were, for instance, "squatters" even in and around the big cities. Although I find almost nothing written about them, there is some reason to believe that they were a large group.<sup>59</sup> Others, though not squatters, lived in miserable shacks, sometimes in the cities, sometimes on their edges.<sup>60</sup>

#### HOUSES IN THE SOUTH

*City homes.*—Weld wrote of Baltimore that its wide streets were lined with good houses, well built and furnished with great elegance. The doors were mostly painted in light colors, and there were cut glass "handles" and silver-plated knockers. In front of the houses were white-marble steps and elegant iron balustrades, surmounted by silver-plated knobs.<sup>61</sup> But Baltimore was already unique in its housing, typical of the South only in that southern houses of the well-to-do did run more to brick than did those of the North. Unique also was New Orleans, with the Creole architecture of its "French Quarter"<sup>62</sup> and with other distinctive differences. Building construction there,

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have been closer to 60 or 65 cents a dozen (Massachusetts, Bureau of Labor and Industries, *Annual Report for the Year 1885*, p. 422). The wholesale price of a seven-inch white granite plate was 7 cents, of a white granite cup and saucer, 9 cents (*Aldrich Report*, II, 269-73).

<sup>59</sup> "It is estimated by those who are perfectly competent to judge, that there is a population of 20,000 on this island that neither pay rent for the dwellings they occupy nor municipal taxes as holders of real estate. They comprise that portion of the population known as squatters" (*New York Times*, November 21, 1864, cited by the *Report upon the Sanitary Condition of the City*, pp. 292-93); see also p. 121, n. 52, respecting squatters around St. Louis.

<sup>60</sup> "It is a mistake to suppose that, in a country where the usual evidences of civilization exist, the condition of a very large body of the inhabitants may not be as degraded as that of savages. . . . To know this I should not need to look farther than the shanties which everywhere border our railroads, that last improvement in civilization; when I see in my daily walks human beings living in sties, and all winter with an open door, for the sake of light, without any visible, often imaginable, wood pile, and the forms of both old and young are permanently contracted by the long habit of shrinking from cold and misery, and the development of all their limbs and faculties is checked" [Thoreau, p. 38]; see also p. 110, n. 13, for the homes of the poor in Chicago.

<sup>61</sup> Weld, p. 334.

<sup>62</sup> For a description of the Creole architecture of New Orleans see Tallmadge, pp. 135-38.

with the swampy soil and the constant menace of the Mississippi, entailed considerable difficulty. According to Edward Sullivan, instead of the solid foundation found in other cities, a raft was made of three-inch planks, sunk in the slime, and houses built upon it.<sup>63</sup> Whether this was really the common method of building or not I don't know; in any case it was customary to have no basement. The homes of the better class were generally of one story, ornamented with green verandas, having balconies, and with their principal rooms open to the street. Most of them were of wood, of an early style; some were of stucco, with landscaped yards.<sup>64</sup> In some parts of the city there were new brick buildings of a more distinctly American type.<sup>65</sup> Since some of the inhabitants were quite wealthy, the city boasted a few really fine residences. Mrs. Sam Cowell copied into her journal from the *New Orleans Picayune* the description of one new house which was quite luxurious.<sup>66</sup>

Elsewhere in the South the houses usually conformed to one of a very few common types. Some were columned mansions, like those described in novels of southern life. A common floor plan was T-shaped, often the result of additions. Sometimes the back porch evolved into a cross-hall, giving cross-ventilation. Another type had an entrance hall extending to the middle of the main body of the house; then through a latticed swinging door one entered a large room with windows and a door which opened on the back porch. The passage and latticed door gave an air current through, but preserved privacy for, the back sitting-room. On either side of the hall were the parlor and guestroom and back of these the family room and another guestroom; back of the dining-room was the kitchen, usually detached. Not uncommonly, chimneys ascended through the very center of the upstairs rooms. The houses were sturdily built, with tough timbers. The flat or deck roof and low hip or ridge roofs were common. The entrance to the house was often double

<sup>63</sup> *Rambles and Scrambles in North and South America* (London: Richard Bentley, 1852), p. 219.

<sup>64</sup> Phillippo, p. 302.

<sup>65</sup> Olmsted, *Seaboard Slave States*, p. 581.

<sup>66</sup> Disher, p. 69.

doors, with side windows and fanlights. Occasionally in the more pretentious houses there were beautiful hand-carved stairs; but the stairs were usually utilitarian and concealed—the continuous-rail stair, without a landing, was the most common. Windows were small, four panes to each, and they were without weights, being propped up with sticks or held up by buttons attached to the window casings. As in the rest of the country, there were no fly screens.<sup>67</sup>

Southern cities were never industrial, in the sense that the factory cities and towns of the North were industrial, and industrial wage-workers made up no great proportion of the population. But there were many poor people, and the houses of the rich are no more typical of the South than of the North. In Baltimore, houses for the laboring classes were usually two- or three-story brick buildings, sixteen feet wide and thirty or more feet deep; behind the main building was a back building of the same height, and between the two a yard with privy and hydrant. Usually these houses were occupied by single families, though sometimes they were sublet; only in a few instances among the very poor did a number of families occupy the same house. But in some sections there were whole streets occupied by a wretched population, mostly German and Irish, crowded together in what was for Baltimore an unseemly and unhealthy manner.<sup>68</sup>

Nine-tenths of the people in Richmond, according to a visitor there, lived in old wooden shanties, patched-up tumbling stables and dwellings, on dusty or muddy roads.<sup>69</sup> Charleston's poor

<sup>67</sup> Boyd, pp. 100 ff. For brief characterizations of the better homes in various southern cities and towns see Mitchell, p. 64; Tallack, p. 49; Olmsted, *Seaboard Slave States*, pp. 20, 135, 318, 575, 581; Phillippo, p. 296; Parsons, p. 23; Robert Russell, p. 258; William Howard Russell, p. 113; Lillian Foster, *Way-Side Glimpses, North and South* (New York: Rudd & Carleton, 1860), p. 188; Dicey, II, 76-77.

<sup>68</sup> William Travis Howard, *Public Health Administration and the Natural History of Disease in Baltimore, Maryland, 1797-1920* (Washington: Carnegie Institution, 1924), p. 30. Baltimore, in 1855, had 31,188 residential buildings and 34,042 buildings of all sorts. Of these, two-thirds were two story, and only 525 less than two story (*Hunt's Merchants' Magazine*, XXXIV [1856], 384-85).

<sup>69</sup> Mitchell, p. 64. It was a propos of Richmond houses that Tallack wrote that the wooden houses of the United States were surprisingly neat and comfortable, many with good porches, galleries, or verandas (p. 49).

lived in one-family wood buildings, though two-story brick tenements were coming into use.<sup>70</sup> In Louisville the houses of the poor were overcrowded and built too close to the ground to be healthful.<sup>71</sup> In the towns of Louisiana and Texas most of the homes were one-story frame cottages, with verandas,<sup>72</sup> although throughout the Gulf states the transition to the Frontier was abrupt—Parsons found the governor of Georgia living in a log house.<sup>73</sup>

Little has been written about the houses of the freed Negroes. At the time of emancipation it was estimated that not less than 12,000 Negro families owned their homes, some of them large and well built.<sup>74</sup> But for the most part the freed Negroes, who labored under social handicaps even when they could earn a good living, seem to have been nearly as badly housed as the slaves. Behind the woods from Ceciltown, Maryland, there were little clusters of huts, called Crooktown and Perrytown, which were inhabited by freed Negroes,<sup>75</sup> and the freed Negroes of Baltimore were not much better housed.<sup>76</sup> In Washington, D.C., the houses of the freed Negroes ran the gamut from hovels to commodious homes. The hovels were crouched behind the imposing dwellings of their employers or were grouped in hidden alleyways. The homes of the well-to-do Negroes, scattered here and there, had either been purchased before passage of the law forbidding freed Negroes to own property or had been acquired in defiance of it. There were some separate communities, especially in southwest Washington in which only freed Negroes lived.<sup>77</sup>

<sup>70</sup> American Medical Association, Committee on Public Hygiene, p. 585.

<sup>71</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 614-15.

<sup>72</sup> Olmsted, *Seaboard Slave States*, p. 581; Mrs. Teresa Griffin Viele, *Following the Drum* (New York: Rudd & Carleton, 1859), p. 80.

<sup>73</sup> P. 115.

<sup>74</sup> George E. Haynes, *The Trend of the Races*, quoted in Thomas D. Eliot (ed.), *American Standards and Planes of Living* (Boston: Ginn & Co., 1931), pp. 130-31.

<sup>75</sup> Coppin, pp. 25-26.

<sup>76</sup> Howard, p. 30.

<sup>77</sup> Federal Writers' Project, W.P.A., *Washington: City and Capital* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1937), p. 73.



The South was far behind the North in its use of water fixtures and sanitary equipment. The leading position among southern cities was taken by Baltimore, which in 1859 had 2,514 baths and 698 water closets,<sup>78</sup> most of them of the pan type,<sup>79</sup> for a population numbering 212,418 in 1860. In few southern cities was there a water-supply system, and running water called for the installation of water tanks on platforms. These tanks were filled from a deep well by a hand pump (on farms sometimes by a windmill) or occasionally by rain-water drains. It was usually piped only to the kitchen, and the "wash stand with its marble top, its bowl and pitcher, and its towel rack was an indispensable piece of furniture in the bedroom of the genteel." Among the less affluent a basin, a bucket of water with a gourd, and a homespun towel on a shelf or table on the back porch constituted the sanitary equipment.<sup>80</sup>

Heating was not the problem in the South that it was in the North. It was reported that in Charleston stoves were rare in 1849 and that in Louisville there were some stoves, some fireplaces.<sup>81</sup> Coal was brought up the river from Mobile to Tuscaloosa, where it sold at \$1.00-\$1.50 a barrel; at 10-12 cents a bushel it was used almost to the exclusion of wood, as it was also at Mobile.<sup>82</sup> But in most parts of the South the only facilities, apart from the kitchen cookstove, seem to have been fireplaces in which log fires were occasionally kindled.

The South, probably because it was more rural, was far behind the North in the number of gas companies, and the rates charged (from \$2.00 to \$4.50 a thousand feet) were somewhat, though not conspicuously, higher. It is doubtful that gas

<sup>78</sup> Baltimore, Water Department, *Annual Report for the Year 1859* (Baltimore: McCoull & Slater, 1859), p. 61; cf. also the advertisement in the *Lexington* (Ky.) *Observer and Reporter*, August 22, 1860: "Luxuries! Bath tubs for bathing in warm weather!"

<sup>79</sup> Howard, p. 144.

<sup>80</sup> G. G. Johnson, *Ante-bellum North Carolina*, pp. 717-18; Boyd, pp. 108-9.

<sup>81</sup> American Medical Association, Committee on Public Hygiene, pp. 585, 615.

<sup>82</sup> *DeBow's Review*, X (1851), 73-74. Cooking and range coal was advertised in the *Washington Union* for \$5.00 and \$6.00 a ton (March 20, 1859), and in the *Tri-Weekly Maysville Eagle* coal was advertised for 9 cents [a bushel?] at the river, 11 cents at the yard (May 18, 1858); see also Appen. D.

was much used for house-lighting in any southern community, with the possible exception of Baltimore. In North Carolina, Raleigh, Wilmington, Charlotte, and New Bern had gaslights by 1860, and the wealthy, after 1845, made much use of camphene lamps and, in 1859 and after, of kerosene lamps. But the average family in comfortable circumstances still had one tallow candle on the supper table, two sperm candles or a camphene lamp in the parlor, and a tallow candle to carry about the house.<sup>83</sup> The same was true of Alabama: kerosene lamps were coming into use in isolated cases, and there were the beginnings of gaslighting in some communities; but for the most part candles were used for lighting, and whale oil and lard were the illuminants in such lamps as were used.<sup>84</sup>

In Alabama there have survived many four-poster, spool, and trundle beds, corner cupboards, high-backed chairs, rush-bottomed chairs, highboys and bureaus, tables and whatnots. Of the plainer sort of furniture, splint-bottomed chairs and pine tables remain to indicate what people used in the ante bellum period. The homes of the wealthier families were elegantly furnished, with pianos, velvet carpets, lace curtains, and oil portraits. There were immense feather mattresses—and others of wool, cotton, and shucks—and woven counterpanes, patchwork quilts, and crazy quilts.<sup>85</sup> Even in the better-constructed houses of the South in the absence of screens the habit of sleeping in curtained beds persisted; there were shutters, but these were poor protection against insects. During meals a small Negro might operate a pulled fly brush or agitate a turkey-feather fan.<sup>86</sup>

*Plantation homes.*—The “Big House” of the southern plantation has become so much a part of tradition that it is difficult to know where fact leaves off and fancy begins. The plantation of

<sup>83</sup> G. G. Johnson, *Ante-bellum North Carolina*, p. 233.

<sup>84</sup> Boyd, p. 108.

<sup>85</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 105-7.

<sup>86</sup> G. G. Johnson, *Ante-bellum North Carolina*, p. 719. Booker T. Washington, when a small boy on the plantation, used to go to the “big house” at mealtime to fan the flies from the table by means of large paper fans operated through a pulley (Washington, p. 9).

tradition, in so far as it existed, was to be found only in tide-water Virginia, the rice districts of South Carolina, the lower Mississippi Valley, and to a smaller extent in certain Piedmont sections.<sup>87</sup>

This traditional plantation mansion was likely to be a ten- or twelve-room country house, standing upon an elevation along the roadside or upon a river bluff. The approach to it was by a road coming up with a wide sweep between rows of trees; the grounds were planted to tall, spreading trees and to shrubs, with pieces of statuary here and there. The nearer the house itself resembled a Greek temple, the better; and columns the height of the house, massive if possible, were the rule. The building material, too, was chosen with the same desire to imitate the Greek; and, while wood, painted white, was most commonly used, stuccoed brick was preferred.

There were two distinguishing characteristics of southern houses: the hall running the full depth of the house and the veranda spanning the front and sometimes surrounding the house. The wide hall gave entrance to the parlors, the library, and the dining-room; a similar hall on the second floor opened on the living-rooms of the family. Ceilings were high and windows tall and wide. Carpets, when there were any, were of plain design. On the walls there were portraits of ancestors and various other pictures and steel engravings. Furniture as a rule was plain but somewhat massive.

The kitchen, in these southern homes, stood wide apart, and in many cases the dining-room was "semi-detached," standing across a porch from the main body of the house. On a large plantation there might be several detached outbuildings—an office, a lodge, a smokehouse, a carriage house, a poultry-house, a dovecot, and houses for domestic servants, besides the ice pits, sweet-potato pits, and wells.<sup>88</sup>

<sup>87</sup> Gaines, p. 144.

<sup>88</sup> This description is drawn largely from Ulrich Bonnell Phillips, *Life and Labor in the Old South* (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1929), pp. 330-32; from Phillips, *American Negro Slavery*, pp. 309-10; and from Dodd, *Cotton Kingdom*, pp. 71-72.

For local variations see Olmsted, *Seaboard Slave States*, pp. 6, 17, 76-86, 91-92, 659, and *passim*; Douglass, p. 67; G. G. Johnson, *Ante-bellum North Carolina*, p. 226, and

From the storybook mansion of the wealthy down to the shack of the poor white there was every gradation. Even on a good many of the large plantations the planter's residence was far from being such a mansion as has just been described.

The type of residence varied with the wealth of the owner, length of time since settlement of the region, and permanence of the agriculture. On some of the older Virginia plantations and in the sugar regions there were many stately mansions, frequently built of imported materials and surrounded with the elaborate handiwork of the landscape gardener. The unhealthfulness of the climate in the rice region and the rapid exhaustion of the land in the cotton region inclined most of the planters to content themselves with modest quarters. There were hundreds of plantations owned by absentees and provided with no "great houses." Throughout the cotton region the plantation houses of the middle-class planters were the reverse of elaborate. At best, they were comfortable frame cottages; at worst, they were miserable log huts. In newer plantation districts there were numerous plantation dwellings constructed of logs.<sup>89</sup>

Many planters lived in simple frame cottages of four or five rooms. Usually there was a wide hall the length of the house separating two groups of rooms; or two rooms and a piazza sprawled out in the rear from the two rooms in front, forming together an enormous L or T. Furnishings, too, were simple. The unpainted floor was bare or covered with hand-woven rugs, the walls whitewashed, sometimes papered or plastered. The furniture was usually made from native wood by the head of the family or a local artisan, and even in the fifties the Dutch oven and the frying pan were the chief kitchen utensils.<sup>90</sup> Farther west the houses were even less pretentious. Most of the planters' houses in Mississippi, according to Van Buren, were long, log, story-and-a-half structures, verandas front and rear, with an open hall in the middle. They were elevated from the ground for coolness and retreated back from the road. Generally they

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*Sea Islands*, pp. 109-12; Avirett, pp. 37-42; Gilmore, pp. 94-95; "An Englishman in South Carolina," *Continental Monthly*, II (1862), 691; Burke, pp. 103-4, 111-12; Boyd, pp. 101, 104; John S. C. Abbott, *South and North* (New York: Abbey & Abbot, 1860), p. 66; William P. Spratling, *Old Plantation Houses in Louisiana* (New York: William Helbrun, Inc., 1927); Northup, p. 263.

<sup>89</sup> Gray, I, 540.

<sup>90</sup> G. G. Johnson, *Ante-bellum North Carolina*, p. 227.

were surrounded by heavy trees and shrubbery and by flowers. It appears from Van Buren's account that the most valuable part of their household equipment, frequently costing more than a hundred dollars, was a large, high-posted, heavy-topped bedstead, rich and massive.<sup>92</sup>

The yeoman farmer's house was typically a four-room log or frame house—two rooms separated by a partition, a loft above reached by a narrow stairway or ladder, and a small lean-to at the end of the back porch, with an immense stone chimney. Other such farmers lived in one- or two-room log houses, while the most prosperous of that class might even have comfortable brick houses.<sup>93</sup> Most of the houses Olmsted saw on his travels were small houses of logs or loosely boarded frame construction, usually without glass windows. Some were built on stilts, and many of them were built with roofs projecting eight or ten feet beyond the wall; a part of the space thus formed could be inclosed to make a sort of room. The fireplace was usually at one end, of sticks and mud.<sup>94</sup> Other travelers described the farmers' houses in much the same terms—no glass, no lighting except for the fireplace, the doors hung on gudgeons and fastened with wooden latches and strings of green hide, outside chimneys of the crudest construction. Furniture was scanty and home-made.<sup>94</sup>

*The homes of the poor whites.*—A little lower than these yeomen in the social scale, though not separated by any clear line of distinction, were the poor whites. They were a large group, including perhaps the majority of the southern whites—such people as the crackers or hillbillies of northern Georgia and

<sup>92</sup> Pp. 52, 207. See also the descriptions by Captain Horton Rhys, *A Theatrical Trip . . . through Canada and the United States* (London: Charles Dudley, 1862), pp. 123-24; Mallard, pp. 16-19; Olmsted, *Back Country*, p. 20—all of small houses, varying in construction and neatness but far from the traditional mansion.

<sup>93</sup> See the descriptions in Gray, I, 489; Dodd, *Cotton Kingdom*, pp. 91-93; and G. G. Johnson, *Ante-bellum North Carolina*, pp. 224-25.

<sup>94</sup> *Seaboard Slave States*, pp. 17, 321, 330, 350, 384-85, 393, 575; *Back Country*, p. 233; *Texas Journey*, pp. 47-48, 60.

<sup>94</sup> E.g., Gilmore, pp. 278-79, 293-94, and particularly Parsons, pp. 107-13; see also R. H. Williams, *With the Border Ruffians* (Toronto: Musson Book Co., Ltd., 1919), pp. 13-14; and Boyd, p. 104.

north central Alabama and the poor whites on semibarren land. Sometimes they owned a few slaves, and their homes might in some instances be better than those of their social superiors. They differed little in their manner of life from the pioneer stage of historical development. Sometimes they owned little besides a rifle, the poor homemade furniture of their cabin, and numerous dogs. Their clothing was spun and woven by the women of the family, and they lived on what they could provide for themselves, exchanging skins, game, or a little meal for coffee and occasionally "sweetening" for the coffee or for the sassafras tea, and for ammunition. They were called the "piney-woods people," "dirt-eaters," "clay-eaters," "the tallow faced gentry," "sand-hillers," or "crackers." Men, and even women, are pictured as having been inveterate drunkards, and the women smoked and chewed.<sup>95</sup>

Such people usually lived in one-room cabins, the logs unhewn and inadequately chinked. Frequently there was no window of any kind, and almost certainly there would be no glass window. There was no floor but the bare earth; the furniture seldom included more than a bedstead or two, a rough pine table, a rough homemade chair or two, and perhaps an improvised cupboard and sometimes a spinning wheel. Some of them had even less furniture—benches or packing boxes used instead of chairs. All were dirty and unkempt.<sup>96</sup>

*The homes of the slaves.*—There were two general classes of slaves. The field hands lived in one-room cabins, usually grouped together in the slave quarters at a distance from the big house; the problem of sanitation and health had the supervision of the master or his overseer. The domestic servants lived in or near the big house.

<sup>95</sup> Dodd, *Cotton Kingdom*, pp. 30-35; Gray, I, 483-84; Paul H. Buck, "The Poor Whites of the Ante-bellum South," *American Historical Review*, XXXI (1925), 41-54; Avery O. Craven, "Poor Whites and Negroes in the Ante-bellum South," *Journal of Negro History*, XV (1930), 14-25.

The isolated mountaineers may be considered as still another group, but it seems unnecessary to make that distinction here.

<sup>96</sup> See the descriptions in Dodd, *Cotton Kingdom*, pp. 94-95; Gilmore, pp. 69-70, 169; Burke, p. 209; Olmsted, *Back Country*, p. 198.

There was so much variation among the quarters provided their slaves by the thousands of planters that generalization is difficult. The general run of cabin was probably better than was usually believed in the North: the Negroes were property, and it would have been a foolish economy to have paid too little attention to their physical well-being. The ordinary arrangement was to erect the cabins in rows, about fifty feet apart and with a couple of hundred feet between the rows; these quarters were sometimes near the "big house," sometimes well removed. The usual cabin was a one-room, one-family unit, about sixteen by eighteen feet; but some planters preferred two-family cabins, and occasionally houses were built to house four or more families. Probably most of them were of logs, but many were of frame construction, and a few even of brick. If they were of logs, the logs might or might not be hewn; but the type most commonly reported was of unhewn logs, inadequately chinked, and with no glass. The more progressive planters erected their cabins on stilts, a couple of feet or so above the ground, for sanitary reasons, and whitewashed them once a year. The best of the cabins had plank floors and brick chimneys, but probably most of them had no floor but the earth, and a stick-and-mud chimney. None of the planters went so far as to provide lighting of any sort, and anything requiring light had to be done by day or in the light of the fireplace. Some planters provided firewood, some let the slaves take what they wanted from a common pile, still others made the slaves forage for their own.

There was the same variation when it came to furniture: almost always there was a bedstead, but even this might be lacking; frequently there was a rough table and a few chairs or benches, and sometimes a clothes chest. There was an iron pot, sometimes a skillet or two, for cooking, and tin plates and cups with a few gourd dippers, for eating.

Slave families were usually large, and living in a single room meant that the quarters were rather cramped. More liberal planters saw to it that big families had more roomy quarters or built a lean-to when the family increased.

Such a summary cannot take into account the local varia-

tions—on the Georgia coast, for instance, the houses were often built of tabby (a plaster of burned oyster shells, lime, and sand, applied to a wattled surface)—or the variations from plantation to plantation. But the living conditions of the slaves have been the subject of so many studies that detail seems unnecessary here.<sup>97</sup>

#### HOUSES ON THE FRONTIER

*The southwest frontier.*—It is often forgotten that there was a frontier in the Deep South, that the inhabitants of the western part of the cotton belt were pioneers, whose living conditions reflected the newness of the country just as did living conditions elsewhere on the Frontier. On this cotton frontier, just as farther north, it was the normal practice to use the logs felled in clearing to make the house. These logs would be notched and a simple, one-room cabin of unhewn poles erected. The crevices could be filled in with clay, and the batten door and window shutters hung on wooden or leather hinges. As time went on, this cabin could be expanded into the "double cabin," of which there were a great many not only on the Frontier but throughout the South: a second cabin would be built, ten or fifteen feet from the first, and connected to it by the roof, providing a sheltered space between. If the planter's prosperity seemed to indicate further improvements, this cabin would be replaced by a more carefully built one of hewn logs, following the same floor

<sup>97</sup> Among modern studies the following may be cited: Ballagh, p. 103; Flanders, pp. 152-56; G. G. Johnson, *Ante-bellum North Carolina*, pp. 525-26, and *Sea Islands*, pp. 89-91; Moody, pp. 72-74; Patterson, pp. 65-66; Taylor, pp. 81-82.

The practices of the best planters are described in DeBow, *Industrial Resources*, II, 331-38, and IV, 177; in *DeBow's Review*, XXIV (1858), 325; in Starnes, pp. 493 ff.; and in Phillips, *American Negro Slavery*, pp. 251-53, 267.

Descriptions by former slaves give the reverse side of the picture: Douglass, pp. 66, 101-2; Northup, pp. 169-71; and Washington, pp. 2-4.

For descriptions by visitors from the North and from abroad see: Abbott, pp. 66-67, 119, 154-55, 161; "An Englishman in South Carolina," *Continental Monthly*, II (1862), 693; Gilmore, pp. 105-6, 128-29; John Dixon Long, *Pictures of Slavery in Church and State* (Philadelphia: The Author, 1857), pp. 18-19; Olmsted, *Seaboard Slave States*, pp. 6, 88, 90, 111-12, 348-49, 386, 393, 416-17, 421-22, 629-30, 659-60, 684; *Back Country*, pp. 74, 141; and *Texas Journey*, pp. 42, 66; and James Stirling, *Letters from the Slave States* (London: John W. Parker & Son, 1857), p. 264.

There are also descriptions in memoirs relating to plantation days, e.g., Avirett, p. 49; and Mallard, pp. 29-31.



plan, but with the joints true, the walls plumb, the crevices thoroughly chinked, the chimney of stone or brick. New rooms could be added to this or a second story raised.<sup>98</sup> These houses, as those of the northern frontier, were frequently built by "raisings."<sup>99</sup>

Olmsted described the house of a Texas cattle grazer—a one-room log cabin, fourteen feet by fourteen, with a small lean-to of boards. There were three doors, but no window—since the house was open to the rafters and the roof had holes between the shingles, a window would have been superfluous. A rough-board box contained the crockery, another the meal, coffee, sugar, and salt; in a log smokehouse was pork. The house furnishings consisted of a bed, a table, four deer-hide-seated chairs, a skillet, a coffee kettle, and a frying pan.<sup>100</sup> The cottages along the coast roads of eastern Texas were typically low walled, of timber and mud, with a high and sloping roof and a chimney of stakes and mud. The usual floor plan was a long living-room, a kitchen at one end, and a bedroom at the other.<sup>101</sup> Olmsted estimated that a small-scale farmer, newly arrived in Texas with a thousand dollars to invest, would spend a hundred and fifty dollars on his cabin and furniture.<sup>102</sup>

*Housing in the Mississippi Valley.*—The rapid western movement of population left what is now the Middle West and even some parts of the East only partially settled. David Humphrey wrote back from Indiana in 1855: "A settlement consists of one log cabin and an acre of cleared land; and a town, of a cabin, blacksmith's shop, and sawmill."<sup>103</sup> Erastus F. Beadle noted in his diary (March 12, 1857) that between Michigan City and Indianapolis "the buildings were nothing but the poorest kind of

<sup>98</sup> Phillips, *Life and Labor*, pp. 328–30; cf. also Beadle's description of a double cabin in Missouri (pp. 18–19).

<sup>99</sup> Smedes, pp. 29–30.

<sup>100</sup> *Texas Journey*, pp. 100–102.

<sup>101</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 402.

<sup>102</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 460. In Austin rents were high—\$10.00 a month for a poor log shanty, the cheapest thing available. There was no coal obtainable; charcoal cost 25 cents a bushel and wood \$3.00 a cord (p. 115).

<sup>103</sup> P. 6.

logg [*sic*] huts."<sup>104</sup> When these first cabins were replaced by more permanent dwellings, the new ones, too, were built by "raising bees."<sup>105</sup>

The houses of rural Illinois are described in Charles B. Johnson's reminiscences.<sup>106</sup> In the ruder cabins floors were made of puncheons, in the better ones of evenly sawed oak boards (which in time shrank and left cracks which let in the cold air.) Overhead unhewn beams supported rough boards that constituted the ceiling of the main room and the floor of the loft, reached by means of a ladder and trap door. The loft served as an extra bedroom. The clapboard roof of the cabin let snow sift in. The stone fireplace and hearth occupied a large part of one end of the cabin, but the chimney, of sticks and clay, ran up the outside. The one window contained six panes of glass, six by six inches, and the door was swung on wooden hinges and was fastened with a wooden latch and a leather string. The furniture included a little table with a Bible and an almanac on it, two beds, each with a huge feather tick and sheets and blankets and a prized counterpane, and perhaps a trundle bed. A valance hung from the bed nearly to the floor, concealing the trundle bed or whatever was stored under the bed. A large chest contained more bedclothing and some of the better wearing apparel.

Meals were cooked on the stone hearth and over the fireplace and served on blue-edged dishes on a drop-leaf table pulled out in front of the fireplace. The chief cooking utensil was a "spider"—a skillet with legs and with a heavy iron cover which held hot coals; other skillets were also used, placed directly on the fire. Matches were in common use in the fifties, so that there was no longer the trouble of going to the neighbors or

<sup>104</sup> P. 6.

<sup>105</sup> Pulszky, II, 75. H. H. Riley's "semi-fictional" account of the household possessions of a western village is suggestive: "The household furniture of the Puddlefordians was always in fashion: in fact, there was a remarkable uniformity in this respect in all the cabins in the settlement. The white-wood table, the dozen cups and saucers, the cookstove and its furniture, bed and bedding, comprised the stock of nearly every family" (*Puddleford and Its People* [New York: Samuel Hueston, 1854], p. 264).

<sup>106</sup> *Illinois in the Fifties*, pp. 12-18, 33-35, 53.

of lighting a fire by means of the flintlock rifle if the fire went out. Candles were made at home, in molds, and coarse cloth and carpets were woven at home on a loom. Outhouses were built with several rooms—a smokehouse, a room for rendering lard, rooms for soap-making, washing, and so on. People in that part of the country seldom took baths; when a bath was necessary they used a wooden tub.<sup>107</sup>

One pioneer family in Michigan lived in a poorly chinked cabin, the boards for the floor brought from a sawmill nine miles away, the fireplace of mud and stone. The furniture—two chairs, bunks, a settle, a table, several stools—was all home-made. Later the cabin was improved by putting in three windows and two doors, partitioning it into four rooms and adding an attic.<sup>108</sup> In Minnesota, also, cabins were of logs or rough boards, the furniture rarely including more than a bed or two, a table, sometimes chairs or stools.<sup>109</sup> Throughout these states in the Old Northwest the usual pattern was, first, to build cabins of unhewn logs, then of hewn logs, and still later to build frame houses and use the old cabins for outbuildings.<sup>110</sup>

This same sort of dwelling—one-room log cabins, twelve feet by twelve, sometimes sixteen by eighteen, with clapboard roof, puncheon floor, a loft reached by a ladder, an improvised door, and a window covered with oiled paper or cloth—was used in the

<sup>107</sup> Beveridge, II, 200. John Regan, in *The Emigrant's Guide to the Western States of America* (2d ed.; Edinburgh: Oliver & Boyd [1852?], pp. 300-309), describes in some detail the processes used in Illinois in constructing sod houses (then still occasionally used), and log houses. His story of a raising bee (pp. 309-16) is also interesting.

<sup>108</sup> Anna Howard Shaw, *The Story of a Pioneer* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1915), pp. 29-33.

<sup>109</sup> Humphrey, pp. 13, 16-17, 19.

<sup>110</sup> Joseph Shafer, *A History of Agriculture in Wisconsin* (Madison: State Historical Society of Wisconsin, 1922), pp. 77-79.

It is Danhof's opinion that on the prairies board shanties were more easily erected and desirable than log cabins, though cabins, sod houses, and even tents were sometimes used. Cabins could be built for from \$25 to \$100; four-room cottages (perhaps the most common) for from \$245 to \$450. On the Illinois prairie, materials for small two-room houses could be purchased for as little as \$150, and for larger houses might cost up to \$1,000 (Clarence H. Danhof, "Farm-making Costs and the 'Safety-Valve': 1850-1860," *Journal of Political Economy*, XLIX [1941], 317-60).

A good impression of housing in Wisconsin may be obtained from Hamlin Garland's *The Trail Makers*.

pioneer regions in Iowa.<sup>111</sup> As the community grew, the homes became less primitive. Frame houses were built of native timber, many with second rooms and some with half-story garrets with gable windows. In some cabins and houses there was furniture brought from the East; but usually split-bottomed chairs and homemade walnut or maple chests and bedsteads were the best the prairie could afford.<sup>112</sup> In the more remote communities, at least, settlers were dependent for light upon "grease dips"—twisted woolen rags fastened to a button sunk in a saucer of melted grease.<sup>113</sup>

On the western margin of this Frontier, housing was so various as to defy description—dugouts, sod houses, and cabins of all kinds. In such prairie states as Kansas and Nebraska, where there was less native wood for building, the first homes were dugouts or sod houses. Typically, the dugout would be an excavation in the side of a hill, perhaps twelve by fourteen feet. In each corner was set a heavy forked timber; poles were laid upon these and across the four sides. Split logs or lumber was then laid upon the poles, upon which thick sods were placed to form a solid roof; sometimes a piece of canvas would be stretched beneath to form a ceiling. The floor might be of puncheons or of dirt pounded hard and covered with cornhusk mats. Sometimes side walls would be built up of sods, and sometimes there would be a log front. In later years the dugout might have an interior of rough, unplastered stone walls.<sup>114</sup> On the level prairie the sod house was more likely to be found than the dugout. This 'soddy' had walls of sod piled up around a rectangular floor, frequently sunk below the ground level. The doors were of cloth or

<sup>111</sup> Irving B. Richman, *Ioway to Iowa* (Iowa City: State Historical Society of Iowa, 1931), p. 178.

<sup>112</sup> MacBride, *passim*.

<sup>113</sup> Richman, p. 180. According to the *Scientific American* (II [1860], 208), lard was used to an "immense extent" as an illuminant in agricultural districts throughout the country. The simplest form of lamp was a saucer with a cloth laid in the edge of it for a wick; thousands of families used no other.

<sup>114</sup> Cf. Albert H. Sanford, *The Story of Agriculture in the United States* (Boston: D. C. Heath & Co., 1916), pp. 220-21. Beadle, in 1857, found farmers around Omaha "living in a hole in the ground for want of time to build better dwellings," and in Omaha one-room houses, fifteen feet square, rented for \$25 a month (pp. 22, 36).

hide, and the chimney was only an opening. The soddies were always small, and could be roofed by putting a sod covering over poles stretched across the walls. The furnishings, whether in dugout or soddy, were meager—perhaps a cast-iron cooking stove and a few other articles of metal cooking ware and a few pieces of crockery.<sup>115</sup>

Peculiar to this region was the "hay tent"—two rows of poles were set up, brought together at the top, and the sides thatched with prairie hay. The house was all roof and gable; the windows and doors were in the end. These first houses were replaced in a year or two by "shake" houses—shakes being rude boards split off from a 32-inch section of log. These frame buildings were cold, leaky, and meagerly furnished—sometimes a box for a table, a trunk or chest for wardrobe, and benches for chairs. The bed might be made of rough boards threaded with cords and covered with a mattress stuffed with hay. Quilts and aprons answered the purpose of doors and windows. Some of the cabins were papered with newspapers from the East.<sup>116</sup>

"The Englishman in Kansas," T. H. Gladstone, recognized here a cycle of development quite similar to that already described for such states as Wisconsin: first the cabin of unhewn logs, at best plastered with mud, then improvements such as a chimney and a second floor; then another cabin to form the regulation "double cabin"; and finally a frame house.<sup>117</sup> The sheds occupied by John Brown and Jason Brown illustrate an early stage; they were open in front, the three sides formed of bundles of prairie hay pressed close between upright stakes, with a roof of poles covered with long shingles. On some such habitations the only roof was cotton sheeting.<sup>118</sup> One of the best houses in Kansas in 1862, looked upon with admiration by all the neigh-

<sup>115</sup> These soddies of the fifties were hastily built, temporary structures. The real "sod-house period" did not come until the settlement of the western part of Kansas and Nebraska, in the seventies and eighties.

<sup>116</sup> The houses of this region and period are well described by Dick, pp. 57-59, 69-70.

<sup>117</sup> T. H. Gladstone, *The Englishman in Kansas* (New York: Miller & Co., 1857), pp. 146-51.

<sup>118</sup> Oswald Garrison Villard, *John Brown* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1910), p. 112.

bors, was a one-room cabin of squared timbers, with an open fire and a single pot, but with glass window sashes opening up and down. There were no chairs, no china, no floor coverings; the table service was made up of tin plates, tin mugs, iron spoons, two-pronged forks, and a serviceable knife. The kitchen had a sturdy table and a set of shelves; the inhabitants sat on nail kegs and packing-boxes. The house was built 15 inches off the ground, the bottom joists bolted into posts. An iron ladder reached the upstairs sleeping-room by way of a square hole in the ceiling.<sup>119</sup> The best of beds in Kansas had only one sheet, of the cheapest muslin. As a rule the cooking stove was the only stove, and finding fuel for it was a problem; matches also were scarce.<sup>120</sup>

*Utah.*—Of the farms around Salt Lake City, Bancroft wrote:

Between the houses of the poor and the rich there was little difference, except that one was of logs and the other of boards. Both seemed like mere enclosures in which to eat and sleep, and around neither was there any sign that the inmates took a pride in their homes. . . .

The city itself wore a different aspect. . . . Most of the private houses were still of wood or adobe, some few only being of stone, and none pretentious as to architecture; but nearly all were surrounded with gardens in which fruit and shade trees were plentiful. Many of them were of the same pattern, barn-shaped, with wings and tiny casements, for glass was not yet manufactured by the Mormons. A few of the better class were built on a foundation of sandstone, and somewhat in the shape of a bungalow, with trellised verandas, and low flat roofs supported by pillars. Those of the poor were small hut-like buildings, most of them one-storied, and some with several entrances.<sup>121</sup>

Mark Twain described Salt Lake City as "block after block of trim dwellings, built of 'frame' and sunburned brick—a great thriving orchard and garden behind every one of them."<sup>122</sup> To

<sup>119</sup> Mrs. Adela Elizabeth Orpen, *Memories of the Old Emigrant Days in Kansas, 1862-1865* (Edinburgh: William Blackwood & Sons, Ltd., 1926), pp. 15-17, 19, 37-38, 49.

<sup>120</sup> Mrs. D. M. Valentine, "Reminiscences of an American Mother on the Western Frontier," *Journal of American History*, IV (1910), 77-84.

<sup>121</sup> *Utah*, pp. 580-82. Remy and Brenchley wrote that the majority of the houses were adobe, generally in a simple style, frequently elegant, and always clean. Some were very large: Brigham Young's was a comparative palace, 98 feet long and 40 feet wide, of several kinds of stone. Still unfinished, it had already cost \$30,000 (II, 193-94).

<sup>122</sup> Samuel L. Clemens (Mark Twain), *Roughing It* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1903), I, 114.

the carcasses into one of the kitchen buildings to dress them. Buddha commanded his followers not to eat meat, but the lamas rationalize their disobedience of his teachings by saying that meat is needed in this cold climate, and that it is not wrong for them to eat it if they do not see the killing.

The climax of this trip, for both us and the lamas, was the magic show held that afternoon in the courtyard of the guest house. The lamas were expecting a lot, having already been mystified by Fred's tricks with a magnetized needle and a disappearing cigarette.

The audience at the show consisted of about fifteen monks, a couple of Chinese-Moslem merchants passing through the district, and a very handsome Khalka woman, whose presence there alone cast some doubts on the seriousness of the monk's vows of celibacy. As Fred pulled brightly colored silks from empty boxes and snatched coins out of the air, they responded with exclamations of wild delight. No one in the audience had seen anything like it, and in broad daylight they had no sense of fear of the unknown. Their enthusiasm was intense. Dunguerbo was one reason for the great success. He outdid himself as an interpreter, enhancing the effect of each trick by being sure that the audience missed nothing. I wished I could understand everything he said; it would have been interesting to see how much he really grasped himself.

If any trace of suspicion or hostility still remained, the show banished it, and when we left next morning, the lamas of Shanda-in Sume seemed genuinely sorry to see us go. As a farewell present they gave us a large package of dried grapes which they said had come all the way from Turkestan, over the Old Silk Road.

*California*.—During the first years of San Francisco's history there had been several disastrous fires, followed by hasty rebuilding. Before 1860, however, improved fire departments and the extension of fire insurance gave the cautious more assurance in the erection of better houses. During the fifties some houses were built of brick; but, because of the winter rains and summer fogs, brick structures did not seem altogether satisfactory. Later, when brick construction had been improved, the earthquake menace and the greater expense kept brick houses from becoming at all numerous.<sup>127</sup> Mrs. Sutherland wrote that, seen from the sea, San Francisco's dwellings were two- or three-story frame houses, some one-story.<sup>128</sup> As H. H. Bancroft described it:

It was a straggling city, however, with its dumps and blotches of hills and hillocks, of bleak spots of vacancy and ugly cuts and raised lines. The architecture was no less patchy, for in the centre prison-like and graceful structures alternated, interspersed with frail wooden frames and zinc and corrugated iron walls, and occasionally the hull of some hauled-up vessel; while beyond rude cabins and ungainly super-imposed stories of lodging houses in neglected grounds varied with tasteful villas embowered in foliage, and curious houses perched high on square-cut mounds. For a time caution set the fashion for residences also of brick, but the winter rains, the summer fogs, and above all the cost and the startling admonition of earthquakes, soon created so general a preference for frame dwellings of all grades, as to make brick dwellings a rarity, and to place another mark of peculiarity upon the city. Wood affirmed its supremacy by yielding more readily to the growing taste for elaborate ornamentation. The distribution of races in this cosmopolitan settlement added to the many distinctive quarters raised by fashion, by branches of trade and manufacture, the most notable being the Hispano-American district along the southwestern slope of Telegraph Hill, adjoined by the French and Italian colonies southward, and the striking Chinatown, which was fast spreading along Dupont street its densely crowded and squalid interiors, relieved here and there by curious signs and façades in gold and green, and pouring forth files of strangely attired beings.<sup>129</sup>

Ten years had passed since the beginning of the great boom, and rents and construction costs had had a chance to fall, but, when

<sup>127</sup> Bancroft, *California*, VI, 777 n., 776 n.; and *California inter Pocula* (San Francisco: History Co., 1888), p. 263.

<sup>128</sup> P. 8.

<sup>129</sup> *California*, VI, 778-79. Mark Twain, in the early sixties, wrote that the "architecture is mostly old-fashioned, many streets are made up of decaying, smoke-grimed, wooden houses" (*Roughing It*, II, 150).



Captain Simpson was there in the middle of the year 1859, he thought the rents still very high.<sup>130</sup>

In Los Angeles most houses were of adobe, with walls three or four feet thick. The ground plan was rectangular, with patios and corridors a characteristic feature. Some had several rooms, but in all houses the architecture was simple; when the house was of two stories, the entrance to the second story was from the outside. Even hearths and chimneys were few, and smoke was carried out not by a chimney but by a pipe leading through the window or wall. Roofs were flat, usually covered with asphalt, but sometimes with tiles. Inner walls were white-washed, the furniture was scanty and plain; and the glassware and tableware of an inferior grade.<sup>131</sup> Adobes, scantily furnished and usually slovenly in appearance, were the commonest sort of houses throughout that part of the Southwest which had once been Spanish.<sup>132</sup>

In all the cities of California the American cookstove had been widely adopted.<sup>133</sup> San Francisco, in 1853, imported 80,000 tons of coal,<sup>134</sup> but in Los Angeles "wood was the only regular fuel for many years, and people were accustomed to buy it in quantities and to pile it carefully in their yards. When it was more or less of a drug on the market, I paid as little as three dollars and a half a cord; in winter I had to pay more, but the price was never high."<sup>135</sup> San Francisco was lighted with coal gas in 1854,<sup>136</sup> but it was probably some years later before gaslighting became at all common in the homes of the city.

*The mining regions.*—Prior to the gold discoveries and migra-

<sup>130</sup> P. 100.

<sup>131</sup> Newmark, pp. 112-14, 124; cf. also Remy and Brenchley, II, 475-76, and Kenderline, pp. 197-98.

<sup>132</sup> Cf. G. Douglass Brewerton, "Incidents of Travel in New Mexico," *Harper's Magazine*, VIII (1854), 577-96; Olmsted, *Texas Journey*, *passim*.

<sup>133</sup> Sutherland, p. 108.

<sup>134</sup> Frank Soulé, John H. Gihon, and James Nisbet, *The Annals of San Francisco* (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1855), p. 495.

<sup>135</sup> Newmark, p. 141.

<sup>136</sup> Soulé, Gihon, and Nisbet, p. 517 (in 1853, 170,000 cases of candles had been imported [p. 495]).

tions of 1858-59 all the settlements and ranches in Colorado had been deserted except for a few scattered settlements of pioneer farmers, who lived in adobe houses with clay and gravel roofs, dirt floors, and whitewashed walls. Their furniture was scanty, and what there was of it was mostly crude and homemade—a board table and some stools and perhaps a tick filled with straw or corn shucks.<sup>137</sup>

The first house built in Denver following the discoveries was a cabin of round logs, roofed with earth, and supported by rough timbers. This was followed by others—a hundred and twenty-five or so—most of them with round logs, about eight feet high, chinked with blocks and mud, the roof frame of rough poles or split timber, covered with grass and that covered with about six inches of earth. There were no glass and no nails. Such houses were dark but warm, and in rain or snow very wet. In 1859 frame houses were being built.<sup>138</sup> Up to 1859 there had been no pane of glass or wooden board in Denver or its then twin-city Auraria, all the dwellings being of logs, without floors and with dirt roofs. In 1859 a sawmill was built about thirty miles south of Denver, and for the first time frame houses could be built.<sup>139</sup>

By 1859, when Greeley, Villard, and Richardson<sup>140</sup> appeared on the scene, the population had grown to 1,000 and the number of buildings to 300. Nearly all the buildings were of hewn pine logs, and a third of them, built as speculations, were unfinished and roofless. Few had doors or glass windows, and only two or three had board floors. There were no chairs, and the furniture was usually made up of stools, a table, and pole bedsteads. Rough boxes served for cupboards and bureaus. The hearth and fireplace were of adobe, and the chimneys were of sticks and

<sup>137</sup> Hafen, pp. 93-97.

<sup>138</sup> Villard, *Past and Present*, pp. 13-15, 31.

<sup>139</sup> *The Rocky Mountain Directory and Colorado Gazetteer, for 1871 . . .* (Denver: S. S. Wallihan & Co., 1870), p. 257.

Since boards were required for the construction of sluice boxes and other mining apparatus, the mining regions usually had sawmills almost from the beginning.

<sup>140</sup> Greeley, *Recollections*, p. 365, and *Overland Journey*, pp. 161 ff.; Richardson, p. 186; Villard, p. 131.

mud. There were a few shingle roofs, but most of the roofs were logs spread with prairie grass and covered with earth. Late in 1859 houses began to be built with windows, shingle roofs, floors and ceilings, and even with plastering. There were frame and even a few brick houses.

Even in 1860 most of the 4,000 inhabitants of Colorado were living in tents or in booths of pine boughs, and there was neither table nor chair in the diggings.<sup>141</sup> But in Denver the old log cabins were being boarded up with siding or displaced altogether by neat frame structures with board floors, glass windows, and shingle roofs. Painted houses were common in the city, although on the bank of the Platte immigrants were living in tents.<sup>142</sup> There were, in 1860, some 350 frame houses, 140 log cabins, 9 brick houses, and a few of adobe.<sup>143</sup> Richardson's house cost him \$3,000, including the cellar and kitchen, and "all the modern improvements"—and it was "better than any of our neighbors," having "walls of upright boards, with cracks battened to keep out rain and dust; chief external features: a square, clapboarded front, three doors, three windows, and a stove-pipe protruding from the kitchen-roof." There was no partition, no ceiling, and its furnishings consisted of a decrepit desk, two dictionaries, a dozen works of travel, a bed, two chairs, three stools, a bench, a table, two revolvers, a musket, a bowie-knife, and three or four trunks and carpet sacks.<sup>144</sup> Rents were enormously inflated at first. A newly arrived family, in May of 1860, rented a four-room house, built of rough boards, unpainted, and with most of its windows covered with muslin, for \$85 a month.<sup>145</sup> None of the houses had lawns or flower gardens, and the sidewalks were only trails through mud.<sup>146</sup>

Other towns in the Colorado mining regions showed the same characteristics, as tents and crude shelters gave way to log houses and these to frame dwellings. Furniture remained

<sup>141</sup> Villard, *Past and Present*, p. 47.

<sup>143</sup> Villard, *Past and Present*, p. 132.

<sup>142</sup> Hafen, pp. 145-46.

<sup>144</sup> Richardson, pp. 295-96.

<sup>145</sup> Evelyn Bradley, "The Story of a Colorado Pioneer," *Colorado Magazine*, II (1925), 50-55.

<sup>146</sup> Hafen, p. 144.

scanty, although a few immigrants brought household furnishings with them.<sup>147</sup>

This same pattern can be found in Virginia City, Nevada, where by the end of 1860 the tents, brush shelters, and crude shanties had been pretty largely replaced by board cabins.<sup>148</sup> In Carson City there were only a dozen frame houses in 1859, and it was customary to use white cotton cloth for partitions, since timber was scarce.<sup>149</sup> The governor's residence, in the early sixties, was a white, frame, one-story house, with two small rooms.<sup>150</sup>

The California camps, having had their beginnings a decade earlier, looked more prosperous and more permanent than those of Colorado and Nevada. In Placerville, Simpson found "some pretty white cottages, with roses clambering up the porticoes, and gardens filled with vegetables and fruit-trees, being visible" in June, 1859.<sup>151</sup> Four years earlier, when the town's population had been about 3,000, Remy and Brenchley had seen there "many good houses" constructed of brick and stone.<sup>152</sup> In the camps log and clapboard houses were replacing the tent and the brush hut, although some of these primitive dwellings were still in use. The interiors of the houses were furnished with home-made bed frames supporting a stretched canvas bed or a bolster of leaves and straw. A homemade table and sometimes a chest and a bench or blocks of wood for seats, a shelf, a broken mirror, and newspaper illustrations fastened to the wall made up the rest of the furnishings. A rude hearth of stones and mud, with a frying pan and pot, served for cooking and heating.<sup>153</sup>

Newest and most isolated of the mining regions were those of the Pacific Northwest. There the characteristic dwelling was a log cabin, roofed with shakes or dirt. Green cowskins were often

<sup>147</sup> See Villard, *Past and Present*, pp. 47, 136-39; Greeley, *Overland Journey*, pp. 166-67, 130, 310, 312; Bradley, pp. 52-53; Hafen, p. 148.

<sup>148</sup> L. B. Glasscock, *The Big Bonanza* (Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill Co., 1931), pp. 71, 75; Shinn, p. 73.

<sup>149</sup> Simpson, p. 92; Clemens, *Roughing It*, I, 173.

<sup>150</sup> Clemens, *Roughing It*, I, 172.

<sup>152</sup> I, 19.

<sup>153</sup> Simpson, p. 98.

<sup>153</sup> Bancroft, *California*, VI, 389.

nailed to the floor in lieu of carpets.<sup>154</sup> The Oregon pioneer home was a simple cabin, usually of logs chinked with moss and mud, although there were a few built of baked mud bricks. The floors were earth, and the roofs of pine boughs with earth thrown over them. Window glass was only occasionally available, and, instead, cotton cloth or oiled undressed deerskins were stretched over the windows. Stoves were rare, and open fires were used for cooking. The furniture was handmade: the table was a large board hinged against the wall (table boards were often packed a hundred miles or more); and, if there were boards enough, bunks were built against the wall and filled with husks, over which blankets were spread. Nearly every family had preserved its feather bed. Buffalo robes and bearskins were common and were used to protect the bed against leaks in the roof. The settlers had brought with them tin dishes, forks, and spoons, and some had earthenware dishes which—as also women's clothing—had to be shipped from London. For lighting there was the open fire or wicks in cups of fish oil. In the mining regions, beginning with the 1861 rush, most houses were frames covered with muslin. They were without windows and had bags of flour or sand to protect the occupants against stray bullets. The first real cabins had cowskin rugs, books and papers, mirrors and pictures. As the towns prospered, new buildings were built of sawed lumber or stone.<sup>155</sup>

<sup>154</sup> William J. Trimble, *The Mining Advance into the Inland Empire* ("University of Wisconsin History Series," Vol. III, No. 2 [Madison, 1914]), p. 382.

<sup>155</sup> Fuller, pp. 278-81.

## CHAPTER VI

### BOARDING AND LODGING

#### HOTEL LIFE IN 1860

*The growth of a class of permanent "guests."*—Although the single-family home was still very much the rule in 1860, an increasingly larger proportion of the population was living in hired rooms and eating purchased meals. There were, indeed, enough such people to give visitors from abroad the idea that nearly all Americans lived in hotels or boarding-houses; and the reader who draws his conclusions from such sources—and from the reports on tenement-house conditions—would probably be of the impression that there were few in the country any more who could or would maintain their own establishments. Our common sense tells us that this was far from true. Except in the larger cities there were few who did not have their own homes; and, as I have already pointed out, only a very small proportion of the population lived in these cities. The others—the boarders and lodgers—were important not in absolute numbers but as indicative of a trend which we cannot safely ignore.<sup>\*</sup>

The growing tendency to live in lodgings is reflected in the history of the American hotel. Up to the building of the Tremont in Boston, in 1829, hotels had had no special facilities for

<sup>\*</sup> As early as 1855 there were 14.7 persons to the dwelling in New York City, 9.3 in Boston, 8.9 in Albany, 7.66 in Providence (with as many as 8.94 in some wards), 7.0 in Baltimore, and 6.5 in Philadelphia, although in the country as a whole 14 out of 15 families lived in single-family dwellings (New York Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor, *Sixteenth Annual Report, for the Year 1859* [New York: John F. Trow, 1860]; Providence, City Registrar's Office, *Annual Report on the Births, Marriages and Deaths for the Year 1860* [Providence: Knowles, Anthony & Co., 1861], p. 351); the *New York City Inspector's Report for 1860*: (pp. 202-3) tabulates the houses of the city by numbers of families living in each: 20,638 were single-family houses; 13,017 held 2 or 3 families; 13,353 held 4 or more families, up to 87. See also U.S. Census Office, *Eighth Census of the United States, 1860: Population* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1864), p. xxvii, which gives the number of persons per dwelling for each state, ranging from 3.04 in California to 6.43 in Rhode Island.

accommodating permanent lodgers; but, from that time on, all first-class houses had at least parlor-and-bedroom suites. Permanent guests enjoyed advantages in rates, of course, over transients. From New York<sup>2</sup> to San Francisco<sup>3</sup> fashionable people liked to live in hotels. Apparently it was a national characteristic.

Although I have no reason to believe that the "American plan" was a response to this characteristic of American life, certainly it simplified matters for those guests—and they were the great majority—who found low rates more to be desired than the personal attention and deference Europeans preferred. During the fifties the American plan was almost universal: for the payment of a fixed amount the guests received their room and meals, including service (but not including such extras as wine or laundry). The hotel's meal service was so arranged that some meal was being served at almost any time of day. Typically, the breakfast was served from five o'clock in the morning until noon, dinner from one-thirty to three-thirty o'clock, "banquet" from five o'clock on, tea from six to eight o'clock, and supper from nine to twelve.<sup>4</sup>

*Hotels in northern cities.*—Modern hotel history begins with the Tremont. It had high ceilings and marble floors; the decorations were in the French mode, the halls and guestrooms carpeted, the windows curtained, and the furniture carved walnut. There were 10 large public rooms, the bar and lobby were separated for the first time in an American hotel, and there was a separate reading-room. There were 170 guestrooms, some single and some double, all with locks on the door and with soap. The hotel had 8 water closets, running (cold) water in the kitchen and laundry, and running (cold) water in 8 baths. The public

<sup>2</sup> Jefferson Williamson, *The American Hotel: An Anecdotal History* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1930), p. 9.

<sup>3</sup> Sutherland, p. 57.

<sup>4</sup> Williamson, pp. 192 ff. Mackay indicates that a common program in the hotels was breakfast from eight to twelve o'clock, luncheon noon to two, dinner two to six, tea from six o'clock on, and supper until midnight. Mackay was impressed by the fact that there was nothing to keep the guest from eating all day, at no extra charge, if he liked (p. 32).

rooms were gas lighted, and the guestrooms had whale-oil lamps.<sup>5</sup> The Revere House, built in Boston in 1847, for many years enjoyed the first rank and best patronage of the country.<sup>6</sup> The Parker House was built in 1854-56 on the old Mansion House site and in 1860 was enlarged by an additional east wing.<sup>7</sup> Another famous Boston hotel was the American House.<sup>8</sup>

The Astor House, in New York City, was built in 1836 at a cost of \$400,000. It had 309 guestrooms and in the basement 17 baths and 2 showers; it was the first to have water closets and running water above the first floor. In 1844 it employed 60 waiters, 5 clerks, 21 laundresses, 5 manglers, 12 cooks, and 20 bell boys.<sup>9</sup> The Howard, built in 1839, was somewhat smaller and less grand than the Astor; by 1850 it had ceased to be a first-class hotel.<sup>10</sup> These were followed in New York by the Carlton House in 1840, the New York Hotel (the first with hall bathrooms and with private baths) in 1844, the Irving House in 1848, the Clarendon about 1850, the Metropolitan in 1852, and the St. Nicholas, Taylor's International Hotel and Saloon, and the Prescott House, all in 1853. The Fifth Avenue Hotel, with 530 rooms, was built in 1859.<sup>11</sup> The St. Nicholas was for a time the largest and was luxuriously furnished; as rebuilt in 1856 it cost \$2,000,000, making it the first "million-dollar" hotel, and had 500 rooms.<sup>12</sup> The Fifth Avenue Hotel occupied eighteen city lots, and besides having a classic interior and exterior had note-

<sup>5</sup> Williamson, pp. 15 ff.

<sup>6</sup> Hiram Hitchcock, "The Hotels of America," *One Hundred Years of American Commerce*, I, 152.

<sup>7</sup> James W. Spring, *Boston and the Parker House* (Boston: Privately printed, 1927), pp. 132-33, 141-42.

<sup>8</sup> It is described by Isabella Bishop (pp. 99-103). Mrs. Bishop was particularly impressed by the fact that the drawing-rooms were heated by anthracite and by the fact that guests seldom drank anything stronger than water at table.

Of her stay in Burlington, Vermont, Mrs. Bishop wrote: "Here, as at nearly every town, great and small, in the United States, there was an excellent hotel" (p. 327).

<sup>9</sup> Williamson, p. 34.

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 44-45, 56.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 41-44.

<sup>12</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 45, 53.



worthy details of construction.<sup>13</sup> In 1860 it was, with Philadelphia's Continental, one of the two hotels in the country with a passenger elevator.<sup>14</sup>

In Philadelphia the American House was built in 1844, the Washington House in 1845, the Girard House in 1852, La Pierre (later La Fayette) in 1853, and the imposing Continental in 1860.<sup>15</sup>

All these metropolitan hotels had rooms much larger than those of today. The New York hotels, from the beginning of the fifties, had some private baths as well as hall baths, and the same was probably true in Boston and Philadelphia at least. The baths were oak or pine boxes, lined with copper, lead, or zinc, and sometimes covered to preserve the heat. The first-class hotels were heated by fireplaces or parlor stoves in the suites and bedrooms, but heated bedrooms were not common in the less pretentious houses, where warming pans were still used. A few hotels just before 1860 had steam heat on all floors, but I think none had steam-heated guestrooms. The annunciator sys-

<sup>13</sup> Hitchcock, p. 152. This seven-story hotel covered the whole of an irregular block on Madison and was built of white marble. Accounts differ as to the number of bedrooms, some saying 500, some fewer; it had 8 large public parlors, 120 private parlors, and 100 baths. The dining-room, seating 600, was particularly handsome; its walls alternated pier glasses with windows, elegant chandeliers hung from the frescoed ceiling, which was supported by Corinthian columns. Among the hotel's facilities were billiard-rooms and chessrooms and reading-rooms. It was gas lighted and steam heated. ("The Fifth Avenue Hotel," *Scientific American*, I [July 2, 1859], 3; and "The Fifth Avenue Hotel, New York," *Harper's Weekly*, III [October 1, 1859], 364, with pictures on pp. 632-33). The *Harper's Weekly* article criticized the hotel for its fixed-price policy—all rooms, regardless of size or location, were subject to the same rate—and for its ornate furnishings—"the whole presenting about as handsome and comfortless an appearance as anyone need wish for."

<sup>14</sup> "The Fifth Avenue Hotel," *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, IX (April 21, 1860), 329; *New York Herald*, January 28, 1860. Chicago's Sherman House, opened in 1861, also had one.

<sup>15</sup> Williamson, pp. 46-47; Hitchcock, p. 152. The Continental was a six-story, 600-room building at Chestnut Street and Ninth, with 4 drawing-rooms and a capacity of 1000. "This spacious Hotel is six stories high, but a vertical railway, on a new and scientific plan, has been contrived, which will take the inhabitants of the upper stories up and down without any of the fatigue of ascending or descending flights of stairs; so that should any delicate lady find no apartment on the lower floors, she need not feel concerned; she can sit in an easy chair and be wafted to her room nearer the stars" (*Godey's Lady's Book*, LX [1860], 465). This elevator is more jokingly referred to in *Vanity Fair*, IV (1861), 148.

tem for calling for service had been in use since the building of Boston's Tremont.<sup>16</sup>

Such hotels as these did their best to satisfy their guests' appetites. "According to a writer in *Putnam's Magazine*, French cuisine was dominant in all hotels in 1853, and all first-class hotels used French terms on their bills of fare, except the Astor house, which insisted on giving English names to all dishes 'capable of translation.'"<sup>17</sup> Some guests from abroad thought that the food was not particularly tasty,<sup>18</sup> but most of them were impressed with the large scale of operations and the variety of food offered at least. Some of them even included menus in their books.

Weld reproduced a menu from Boston's Revere House.<sup>19</sup> Among the broiled meats were beefsteak, pork steaks, mutton chops, calf's liver, sausages, ham, and squabs; fried meats included pig's feet, veal and mutton kidneys, sausages, tripe, salt pork, and hashed meat; there were codfish with pork, fish balls, hashed fish, fresh salmon, broiled mackerel, broiled smoked salmon, Digby herring, halibut, and perch-with-pork; eggs were served boiled, "skinned," fried, scrambled, and "dropped" (poached); there were plain, parsley, onion, and ham omelets; stewed, fried, and baked potatoes; a variety of breads, including hot rolls, Graham rolls, Graham bread, brown bread, dry and "dipped" toast, hominy, fried Indian pudding, cracked-wheat bread, corncake, and griddle cake; and to drink there were tea, coffee, cocoa, chocolate, and iced milk. H. Reid described the variety of food offered at another Boston hotel, the American House: there were, following the soup and fish, six boiled meats, three cold meats, ten entrees, and six roasts, besides the desserts, ices, beverages, and so on. His chief complaint was that

<sup>16</sup> Williamson, *passim*. The Hon. Henry A. Murray has left us an interesting picture of the metropolitan hotels of the fifties, their lobbies and lounges, annunciators, bar-rooms, bridal chambers, and their general atmosphere of bustle and confusion (*Lands of the Slave and the Free* [London: G. Routledge & Co., 1857], pp. 11 ff.).

<sup>17</sup> Williamson, p. 214.

<sup>18</sup> Gratton (I, 108) thought it "detestable."

<sup>19</sup> On p. 31; Bunn (pp. 38-39) also devoted space to the Revere House menu.

one had to eat in a public dining-room.<sup>20</sup> Since breakfast, dinner, and supper were practically identical,<sup>21</sup> hotel guests should have been abundantly fed.

For a room with four or five big meals the most celebrated hotels of the big cities charged \$2.50 a day; in New Orleans one might have to pay \$3.00. Elsewhere throughout the country the customary charge in the first-class hotels was about \$2.00, and many eminently respectable hotels charged only from \$1.00 to \$1.50.<sup>22</sup> According to Nichols a room on the European plan (i.e., without meals) cost 50 or 75 cents and occasionally a little more.<sup>23</sup>

Cincinnati's best-known hotel was the Burnet House (1850), sumptuously furnished, with 250 bedrooms, large drawing-rooms, spacious corridors, and other attractions.<sup>24</sup> It was followed in 1853 by the Spencer House.<sup>25</sup> Hotels in other Ohio cities were less grand.<sup>26</sup>

At a western hotel like Terre Haute's Prairie House the traveler found far less elegance, but there was plenty of food. As J. Richard Beste described his breakfast:

<sup>20</sup> Pp. 236-37.

<sup>21</sup> This was true until the nineties, according to Williamson (p. 202). The similarity of meals was not peculiar to metropolitan hotels but was true also of western inns (J. Richard Beste, *The Wabash* [London: Hurst & Blackett, 1855], II, 71), as well as of meals at home.

<sup>22</sup> Baxter, p. 34; Bunn, p. 38; Chambers, p. 183; Hancock, p. 141 (complains of the service, though approving the meals); Mackay, p. 32. *A Selection from the Letters of John Ashton Nicholls* ([Manchester, England: Johnson & Rawson], 1862), p. 224; Nichols, II, 11-13; H. Reid, p. 237; James Robertson, *A Few Months in America* (London: Longmans & Co., 1855), p. 153; Trollope, p. 560; Watkin, p. 9; cf. also Williamson, pp. 192 ff. *Harper's Weekly* (I [May 30, 1857], 338) reported the decision of some of the leading New York hotels to raise their rates from \$2.50 to \$3.00 a day.

Trollope wrote that, while all over the United States the charge was nearly always \$2.50, monthly boarders were charged not more than half that amount.

<sup>23</sup> Nichols, II, 13.

<sup>24</sup> Hitchcock, p. 152; Williamson, pp. 99-100.

<sup>25</sup> Williamson, p. 100.

<sup>26</sup> When J. Richard Beste stayed in a Sandusky hotel early in the fifties, he was given a large bedroom; but its walls were bare and whitewashed, and there was little furniture apart from the double beds. There were three large windows, but almost every pane was cracked or broken, the sashes did not fit the frame, and there were no weights or pulleys (I, 158-59).

There were ranged down the table and cut into slices, hot and cold bread of different sorts, including cornbread (a little of which was rather nice with plenty of molasses and butter), little seed cakes, pancakes and fritters, butter buried in large lumps of ice, molasses, preserves and blackberry syrup in large soup tureens. Besides these things, there were hot beefsteaks, roast and boiled chickens, and various sorts of cold meat. To drink, we had tea, coffee, and, occasionally, chocolate, with hot, cold, and iced milk, and white and brown sugar. . . .

At dinner, there was roast beef always, and, in general, the following dishes:—chicken pie, veal pie, beefsteaks, roast lamb, veal and mutton cutlets, boiled ham, pigeons, roast veal or roast pork. As vegetables, we had generally elderly peas and beans, hominy (a sort of dry bean resembling haricots [*sic*]), and potatoes. Once, we had sweet potatoes, which were red and tasted like common potatoes diseased; and, at another time, we had a vegetable called squash; and always boiled ears of green Indian corn. Several times, we had soup made of land turtles, which was good. Our sweets were generally custard pie (there are no tarts in the United States, everything there is “pie”), or sometimes cherry pie, squash pie, apple pie, and occasionally blackberry pie. Sometimes, too, we had stewed pears or roast apples. Then followed cheese and dessert; at which, latterly, there were large bowls of iced cream and watermelons, which they called “cholera bombshells”; and, in spite of their terrific name, they were eaten with avidity. Nuts and almonds were, also, always on the table.

For such fare, with lodging and attendance, the charge was \$5.00 a week.<sup>27</sup>

Chicago had 57 hotels in 1855, 8 of them “first class.”<sup>28</sup> The third Tremont Hotel, at Dearborn and Lake Streets, was a five-and-a-half-story brick building costing \$75,000, which in 1861 was remodeled and enlarged on a grand scale. The Sherman House started as the City Hotel, built in 1836–37; it was remodeled and a fourth and fifth story added in 1844. This was torn down in 1861 and a new Sherman House built at Randolph and Clark streets the same year. This Sherman House was a six-story marble building, which cost more than \$200,000; the land cost another \$150,000, and the furniture and appointments brought the total to nearly half a million. Several other hotels

<sup>27</sup> *Ibid.*, II, 3–4, 67–71. Terre Haute was then little more than a village, and it is not surprising that Beste found the Prairie House a little distressing. His particular grievances were the heat and the insects that came in when the windows were open (II, chap. iv, esp. pp. 80–84).

<sup>28</sup> A. C. Cole, p. 22.

costing from \$20,000 to \$60,000 each were built during the fifties.<sup>29</sup>

The second Planters' House, opened in St. Louis in 1841, was "the largest hotel west of the mountains" and equal to any in the East in furnishings and appointments. It had 215 guest-rooms, a classic ballroom, English-made china and cutlery, with the name of the house "fired on the China." Its fame was due chiefly to its cuisine—in particular to its fried chicken, waffles, and candied sweet potatoes.<sup>30</sup> Ambitious projectors built the \$200,000 Patee House in St. Joseph, Missouri, when the population of that town was less than a thousand. When the station for the new railroad was located some distance away, the hotel proved a financial failure.<sup>31</sup>

Caird thought Milwaukee's Newhall House was little inferior in size, architecture, interior fittings, and arrangements to the Hotel de Louvre in Paris.<sup>32</sup> It was a brick hotel, with 276 guest-rooms, 25 suites, besides parlors, and 2 dining-rooms. It was beautifully furnished, with suites of rosewood and brocatelle and with frescoed walls. There were hot- and cold-water baths in some rooms at least, and gas in all rooms. It cost \$160,000, with an additional \$80,000 for furniture.<sup>33</sup>

Even a town like Dubuque could boast having 18 hotels and inns. In the single year 1856 there were erected the Lawrence Hotel Block, costing \$90,000, and 5 other hotels costing from

<sup>29</sup> A rather complete history of Chicago's hotels during this period is to be found in Andreas, II, 501 ff. For an enthusiastic contemporary description of the Tremont see Lillian Foster, pp. 213-14.

The great crowds of visitors during the fifties rendered the boarding-houses and hotels completely inadequate, and private homes and hotels with dormitory arrangements were pressed into service. These last, for \$1.00 a day, offered accommodations with no privacy, ridden with insect pests, the parlor dirty, the food badly cooked and served on badly washed dishes. They were patronized by Irish and Scotch immigrants, French traders, Mexicans, and others (Pierce, II, 464-65).

<sup>30</sup> Hitchcock, p. 151; Herbert Asbury, *Sucker's Progress* (New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1938), p. 280.

<sup>31</sup> Arthur Chapman, *The Pony Express* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1932), pp. 95-96.

<sup>32</sup> P. 98.

<sup>33</sup> *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, VII (May 21, 1859), 385-86.

\$14,000 to \$30,000 each.<sup>34</sup> Davenport's Burtis House had 150 guestrooms in its five stories, and a dining-room thirty-nine by eighty-one feet. A steam pump conveyed running hot and cold water to all floors. In the basement were a laundry, a restaurant, a billiard-room, a barroom, a smoking-room, a barber-shop, and bathrooms; on the first floor the rotunda, the dining-room, a reading-room, ladies' parlors, and washrooms and private rooms. The hotel was steam heated throughout and gas lighted. There were several other hotels in the same city.<sup>35</sup>

Besides these there were the resort hotels, such as those at Niagara Falls and at Saratoga and along the Atlantic coast—Nahant's Nahant House, which had 800 rooms and was gas lighted and steam heated, Cape May's Mount Vernon, the first to have a bath (but not with running hot water) in every room, and many others.<sup>36</sup>

These northern hotels, the ones which travelers mentioned in their books and which have survived in history and in legend, were for the most part the leading hotels in the larger cities. For the others one must depend mostly upon his imagination. Baxter does refer to the small, wayside inns, with their dirty barrooms, ill-cooked meals, and scantily furnished rooms.<sup>37</sup> Probably many were just that.

*Hotels in southern cities.*—There were a few excellent hotels in the South. Baltimore had its City Hotel in 1829 and Eutaw House in 1835.<sup>38</sup> The Gilmore House, built in 1856, was a five-story brick hotel, costing \$200,000, whose particular pride was a three-story ornamental iron veranda.<sup>39</sup> This and Barnum's City Hotel, which was improved in 1859-60 and had a capacity of 500, put the old Eutaw and its 300 capacity in the shade.<sup>40</sup>

The Charleston Hotel, in Charleston, had a capacity of 300.

<sup>34</sup> *Hunt's Merchants' Magazine*, XXXVII (1857), 443.

<sup>35</sup> Franc B. Wilkie, *Davenport Past and Present* (Davenport: Luse, Lane & Co., 1858), pp. 277-81.

<sup>36</sup> See below, pp. 346 ff.

<sup>37</sup> Baxter, p. 34.

<sup>38</sup> Williamson, p. 47.

<sup>39</sup> "The Gilmore House, Baltimore," *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, IX (May 5, 1860), 363-64.

<sup>40</sup> *Appleton's Guide*, p. 252.

Its competitor, the Mills House, was newer and more florid, with costly furniture and rich decorations. There was also the Pavilion Hotel, less pretentious but almost as large.<sup>42</sup> In New Orleans the St. Louis was rebuilt in 1841, and the more famous St. Charles rebuilt after 1853.<sup>42</sup> Mobile's well-known Battle House, built in 1852, had the distinction of being the first to cook breakfasts to order on a large scale.<sup>43</sup>

There can be no doubt that Washington, for a city of its size and importance, had the poorest hotel accommodations imaginable.<sup>44</sup> All the public men whose duties forced them to live in Washington part of the year lived in boarding-houses.<sup>45</sup> Charles Francis Adams (the second of the name) described Washington's hotels as "unkempt barracks, spotted along the north side of Pennsylvania Avenue, from the Capitol to the Treasury. They all had the third-rate, Southern slouchy-aspect and atmosphere."<sup>46</sup> The National Hotel was the largest. At Buchanan's inaugural there had been an outbreak of disease there, popularly known as the "National Hotel Disease," believed by some due to improper sewerage. In 1857 in the course of improvements the kitchen was demolished and re-equipped, and there were "new and admirably ventilated parlors." After the improvements there was no return of the sickness. Willard's Hotel was enlarged in 1858 and refurnished in a subdued fashion; its din-

<sup>42</sup> "Charleston, the Palmetto City," *Harper's Magazine*, XV (1857), 18-19.

<sup>42</sup> Williamson, pp. 46, 97 ff.; Lillian Foster's description of the St. Charles (pp. 152-56) is glowing to the point of eulogy.

<sup>43</sup> Hitchcock, p. 152.

<sup>44</sup> Dicey wrote: "The grand hotels, too, which form a striking, if not an imposing feature in most American towns, are wanting in Washington. Even according to the American standard, there is not a decent hotel in the whole place. Willard's and the National are two huge rambling barracks where some incredible number of beds could be run up; but it is hard to say which is the shabbiest and dirtiest internally; and externally, neither of them have any pretensions to architectural grandeur. Of the lot, Willard's is the best, on the principle that if you are to eat your peck of dirt, you may as well eat it in as picturesque a form as possible" (I, 95-96). Cf. Mackie, pp. 10 ff. G. W. Bagby ("Washington City," *Atlantic Monthly*, VII [1861], 5-6) also ridiculed the Washington hotels.

<sup>45</sup> See the biographies of supreme-court justices, congressmen, cabinet members, and other persons in public life.

<sup>46</sup> P. 48.

ing-room seated 800. Another prominent hotel was Brown's.<sup>47</sup> Olmsted had to pay \$2.50 a day at Gadsby's Hotel for a room which had a cracked ceiling and "variegated" walls. There were three yards of ragged and faded "quarter-ply" carpeting on the floor, the towel was a quarter-yard of toweling with a big hole in the middle, and there was no curtain over the dirty window, which rattled in its casements. The latch was broken, the chair broken, and the table greasy. Added to these annoyances, the room was cold and the service abominable.<sup>48</sup>

Northern guests in southern hotels were frequently dissatisfied with the hotels and with the service. Olmsted's travels in the South were a succession of hotels, some good and some bad. In Richmond he found the American a "capital" hotel, but at Norfolk the best hotel had been closed for lack of patronage, and the defects of the second-best he described at some length. The hotels at Gaston, North Carolina, and at Columbus, Alabama, were also bad. The Battle House, at Mobile, he thought an excellent hotel, though its charges were too high (that it was kept by Boston men he was quick to point out). New Orleans' St. Charles Hotel he thought stupendous, tasteless, ill-contrived, and inconvenient. The hotel at Nachitoches, Louisiana, was very good; but at Washington, in the same state, the hotel was bad again and none of the rooms private. The hotels in Texas, as might be expected on the Frontier, were without exception dirty and dilapidated, the food uneatable, and the service execrable. Typical was the "Railroad House" at Victoria, whose advertisements had made a great point of the number of sleeping-rooms. These proved to be made by cotton partitions, without doors, and Olmsted's room was invaded from time to time during the night by people looking for candles, matches, and other things. The hotel at Woodville, Mississippi, was bad; and at Vicksburg there was no hotel except the wharf-boat (a boat used

<sup>47</sup> L. A. Gobright, *Recollections of Men and Things at Washington* (Philadelphia: Claxton, Remsen & Haffelfinger, 1869), p. 168; Mary J. Windle, *Life in Washington* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott & Co., 1859), pp. 376-77; William D. Haley (ed.), *Philips' Washington Described* (New York: Rudd & Carleton, 1861), pp. 207-8.

<sup>48</sup> *Seaboard Slave States*, pp. 2-5.



for unloading, in the absence of a permanent wharf), of which the staterooms, saloon, and other rooms were used as a hotel.<sup>49</sup>

James Roberts Gilmore thus described the hotel in a North Carolina hamlet:

Among the "peculiar institutions" of the South are its inns. I do not refer to the pinchbeck, imitation St. Nicholas establishments, which flourish in the larger cities, but to those home-made affairs, noted for hog and hominy, corn-cake and waffles, which crop out here and there in the smaller towns, the natural growth of Southern life and institutions. A model of this class is the one at Georgetown. Hog, hominy, and corn-cake for breakfast; waffles, hog, and hominy for dinner; and hog, hominy, and corn-cake for supper—and such corn-cake, baked in the ashes of the hearth, a plentiful supply of the graying condiment still clinging to it!—is its never-varying bill of fare. I endured this fare for a day, *how*, has ever since been a mystery to me, but when night came my experiences were indescribable. . . . Scarcely had my head touched the pillow when I was besieged by an army of red-coated secessionists, who set upon me without mercy. . . .

And the hotel! Would Shakespeare, had he known it, have written of taking one's *ease* at his inn? It was a long, framed building, two stories high, with a piazza extending across the side and a front door crowded as closely into one corner as the width of the joint would permit. Under the piazza, ranged along the wall, was a low bench, occupied by about forty tin wash-basins and water pails, and with coarse, dirty crash towels suspended on rollers above it. By the side of each of these hung a comb and brush.<sup>50</sup>

Robert Russell stayed at the best hotel at Natchez, whose accommodations he found indifferent, though the charges were as high as those of the St. Nicholas.<sup>51</sup>

Contrasting with these were the hotels of the Carolina resorts, the mountain retreats, the more than a dozen taverns and watering places of national reputation in Kentucky.<sup>52</sup>

In some of these southern hotels there was excellent food. Dallas Hall, in Cahaba, Alabama, for instance, served its guests soup, red snapper dressed with oysters, roast mutton, vegetables, multitudes of stews and side dishes, puddings, pies,

<sup>49</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 49, 305-6, 315, 548, 566, 581, 624, 643; *Texas Journey*, pp. 111-12, 250, 259; *Back Country*, pp. 16-17, 125.

<sup>50</sup> Gilmore, pp. 15-16, 227-28. I have omitted a detailed description of the animal life.

<sup>51</sup> P. 258.

<sup>52</sup> See J. Winston Coleman, Jr., *Stagecoach Days in the Bluegrass* (Louisville: Standard Press, 1935), chap. xi, as well as below, p. 347.

jellies, boiled custards, cake, apples, nuts, coffee, and cheese. Most of the Alabama hotels charged \$1.00 or \$1.50 a day.<sup>53</sup>

In the light of the present reputation of ante bellum southern cooking, it is surprising to find that most visitors to the South found the hotel meals much worse than those of the North. Probably one reason for the apparent discrepancy is that the cooking which gave the South its reputation was that found only in the aristocratic southern homes; another reason is that the visitors were comparing the village inns of the South with the metropolitan hotels of the North. But even when all allowance is made, it does seem to be true that southern cooking needs to be deflated. Olmsted struck a hotel in Virginia where there was no fresh meat of any kind to vary the ham and eggs of the menu.<sup>54</sup> Gilmore's description of the fare at Georgetown, South Carolina, has already been quoted.<sup>55</sup> At the Commercial Hotel in Vicksburg the waiter gave Olmsted an elaborate menu; but nothing on the list could be obtained from the kitchen, and he had to put up with "grimy bacon, and greasy cabbage."<sup>56</sup> At all the inns in western Louisiana and in Texas the meals were salt pork, corn bread, sometimes fresh pork and sweet potatoes, and bad coffee. At one such inn he was charged \$1.25. In frontier Texas Olmsted found hotel food hard going. At Austin's three "hotels" the only thing worse than the food was the service; and at Lavacca there was nothing eatable on the table except stale corn bread—"everything else drenched in bad melted butter"—and there was no milk. The charge was \$1.00 a night, for man and horse.<sup>57</sup>

<sup>53</sup> Boyd, pp. 72, 114. At Montgomery the American Hotel charged \$1.25 a day, \$6.00 a week, or \$18.00 a month; single meals were 50 cents. The Rialto House charged \$1.50 a day. At Tuskegee, Brewer's Hotel charged \$12.50 a month for board, without lodging. The resort hotel at Ligon Springs charged 75 cents a day for board, \$4.00 a week, or \$14.00 a month (p. 224). Fayette House, Lexington, Kentucky, charged 25 cents for meals, 25 cents for lodging (advertisement in the *Lexington Observer and Reporter*, April 16, 1859).

<sup>54</sup> *Seaboard Slave States*, pp. 74-75.

<sup>55</sup> Above, p. 159.

<sup>56</sup> *Back Country*, p. 126 (the menu is given on p. 127).

<sup>57</sup> *Texas Journey*, pp. 60-61, 111-12, 250.

*The frontier taverns.*—In the West, except for the hotels of the larger towns, the taverns were rough-and-tumble affairs, log or frame. Frequently travelers had to seek shelter at any house they came to. They encountered all sorts of accommodations: the early settlers were poor, and their home life and surroundings reflected their poverty. Travelers had to share rooms and even beds; clean linen was rare, and the beds liable to be inhabited by insects of various sorts. The meals varied, depending on the hosts and on what food supplies were available. When there were taverns, they served not only as places for travelers to stay but as public gathering places, theaters, and halls for banquets or for dancing.<sup>58</sup>

On the edge of the Old Northwest the familiar double log cabin—two rooms with a hallway between or with a doorway connecting—was a common form of tavern. The construction of the tavern was a community event, and all the settlers came to assist. Great care was exercised in selecting and cutting the trees. The floors were sometimes boards, sometimes puncheons, sometimes even earth. Roofing was composed of shakes or clapboards. Wooden pins might be used instead of nails. If sawed lumber was not available for doors, “splints” or long clapboards, fastened to crosspieces, were used. The cracks of the walls were chinked with triangular pieces left from making the shakes and with clay, but even so the cracks were sufficient to provide plenty of ventilation. The hearth and the sides and back of the chimney were usually stone, but the upper portion of the chimney was frequently constructed of mud-covered sticks.

Other taverns were built of sod, the inside plastered with mud or lined with flat pieces of sandstone or limestone. Sometimes, even in the log taverns, there was no chimney—only a hole for the smoke to go through. Light came through the chimney, through a hole in the wall covered with oiled paper, or through small panes of glass—perhaps a sash of six lights, eight-by-ten. Until the kerosene lamp made its advent, light at night came from the fire, from tallow candles, or from an oil lamp.

<sup>58</sup> Milo M. Quaife, *Chicago's Highways Old and New from Indian Trail to Motor Road* (Chicago: D. F. Keller & Co., 1923), pp. 168-80.

The latches were of the familiar wooden sort. Some had primitive winding stairways leading to low-ceilinged attics, but frequently the only means of access was a series of pins driven into the log wall or a ladder. These attics usually accommodated a person only on his hands and knees; and the floor was of rough boards or poles. Furniture was of the simplest, brought with the family or homemade on the spot; the tables were often of cleated puncheons on posts, or the door might be taken off and used; the bedstead was frequently supported by only one leg and the walls, and it was usually corded and but scantily covered; there were three-legged stools, and sometimes split-bottomed chairs. Two pins above the fireplace supported a mantel board; and all the cooking was done before the open fire. Dishes were few, sometimes supplemented by home-made wooden dishes.<sup>59</sup>

By the fifties these primitive taverns had given way in some districts and were giving way in others to frame taverns, whose raising was still a community affair. Despite the abundance of timber, the ceilings in many of these inns were so low that persons of ordinary height could scarcely stand upright. Some taverns were built quite spaciouly—twenty or thirty rooms or more. Often the second floor was a maze of rooms connected in a bewildering fashion. These later taverns of frame or even of brick were lighted by day with small windowpanes, by night with tallow candles in tin candleholders or sconces, whale-oil lamps, or the new kerosene lamps. Bathtubs were unknown. In winter there was no washing except of the hands and face, which required only a small basin at a wooden sink, soft soap, and a roller towel. Some taverns had clocks, others had none. Some were papered with eastern newspapers. Some had pictured newspapers—a special pride—but usually there were not enough dishes of any kind. “Nearly every tavern on the Milwaukee-Madison road harbored a glass case of mounted birds, and usually among the specimens was a pair of passenger pigeons.” There were other natural-history specimens and curiosities. “On the bar were China match stands from which the frugal helped

<sup>59</sup> H. E. Cole, *Stage Coach and Tavern Tales of the Old Northwest*, ed. Louise Phelps Kellogg (Cleveland: Arthur H. Clark Co., 1930), pp. 87-98.

themselves in anticipation of future smokes." The floor of the barroom was usually covered with sawdust. Notched tissue papers in various colors hung from the ceilings, and there were soaped sketches on frosted mirrors back of the bar.<sup>60</sup>

The food one found at these taverns depended upon the landlord and his wife and upon the foodstuffs they could obtain. Usually there was plenty to eat, but it was not varied or of very good quality; the service was poor and the culinary equipment meager.<sup>61</sup> At the Townsend House—a red-brick farmhouse in Indiana—Beste was served a good dinner on a white tablecloth.<sup>62</sup> Occasionally an enterprising landlord could provide his guests with wild game and fowl, fresh pork, fresh and salt fish, fresh fruit and vegetables, preserves, hominy, honey and maple syrup, and nuts; and perhaps even with soups, cottage cheese, dumplings, meat pies and pasties, and other delicacies.<sup>63</sup>

Country taverns in Illinois were usually two-story buildings with a long porch the length of the structure. Through its center was a hall that led into a large dining-room, and upon one side of the hall was a lady's parlor and on the other the office, usually referred to as the barroom. A stairway in the hall led to a number of sleeping-rooms upstairs.<sup>64</sup> Charges at these country taverns were trifling. Lincoln and a companion once paid 75 cents for supper, lodging, and breakfast, for the two of them, including feed and stabling for their horses.<sup>65</sup>

<sup>60</sup> Reprinted by permission of the publishers, The Arthur H. Clark Company, from Harry E. Cole's *Stagecoach and Tavern Tales of the Old Northwest*, pp. 107-16. Mrs. Cowell, between Chatham and Detroit, found that on the plains "now and then a wooden shanty is seen, in solitary state, bearing such a title as 'The Hunger's Home,' 'The Great Western Hotel,' etc." (Disher, p. 194).

<sup>61</sup> Quaife, pp. 173-75; see also C. B. Johnson, pp. 52-53.

<sup>62</sup> Beste, I, 316-18. According to Beste, the innkeeper was a hospitable farmer, reluctant to turn away strangers who knocked at his door, and forced to put up an inn sign to keep from being eaten out of house and home by persons seeking free meals and lodging. William E. Wilson (*The Wabash* [New York: Farrar & Rinehart, Inc., 1940], pp. 248-49) writes as if this were a common occurrence in such states as Indiana. If so, it helps explain why many "inns" were as primitive as they were.

<sup>63</sup> See the rather glowing account in H. E. Cole, pp. 211-22.

<sup>64</sup> C. B. Johnson, pp. 51-53.

<sup>65</sup> Beveridge, II, 255.

Few hotels west of the Mississippi were sufficiently imposing to get into the books of the historians of the hotel. Exceptions were the Douglass House, built in Omaha in 1855, and the more ornate Herndon, which followed it three years later.<sup>66</sup> For a time Saratoga, now a part of Omaha, used the steamboat "Washington City," purchased for \$15,000, for a hotel.<sup>67</sup> In Lawrence, Kansas, the St. Nicholas, which had been built in 1854 of poles interwoven with hay, the sides banked with sod to a height of three or four feet and lined with cloth,<sup>68</sup> had soon been replaced. The Free State Hotel was destroyed in 1857 and replaced the same year by the Eldridge House, a four-story brick building, handsomely built and elegantly furnished, and said to have cost \$80,000.

T. H. Gladstone stayed at the "Temperance House" in Leavenworth, a low-roofed wooden building with two rooms in front, others at the rear. His room was uncarpeted, drafty, the walls unpainted boards, the beds furnished only with shuck mattresses and dirty blankets. Three or four chairs and a small rickety table were the other furniture—there was no mirror or washstand. Behind the hotel was a board with a couple of tin basins filled with river water; a square foot of mirror with brush and comb attached by means of a string hung above them. At this hotel

the host particularly prided himself on the powers of his cook, and the superiority of his table generally. "Step in, stranger; the crowd's going in to eat," was my summons, soon after six o'clock, to breakfast; the same at half-past twelve for dinner; and at six in the evening for supper. These are the good hours kept generally by Western folk. I entered the dining-room, saw the table covered with breakfast fare, including the usual small dishes of meat and cakes and apple preserve. The "crowd" was standing around the table, each man with a hand upon the back of his chair. The female portion of the company having been seated, a signal was given, and a simultaneous action ensued. The movement of the chair with one hand, the seizure of the nearest small dish with the other, the sudden sitting down, and the commencement of a vigorous eating, were the work of a moment. In five minutes the company had left the table for the gallery on the street front, the better for damp, Indian-corn bread eaten with molasses, sliced bacon cooked, apparently, in grease, and tea or coffee. Some few, more fortunate or more quick to seize

<sup>66</sup> Williamson, p. 102.

<sup>67</sup> Beadle, p. 40.

<sup>68</sup> Dick, p. 58.

opportunities, had obtained a piece of Johnny-cake, or some apple-sauce, or other delicacy from the smaller dishes, in addition. At dinner it was the same; and at each meal in about equal quantity. The next day the same, and so on every day.<sup>69</sup>

Horace Greeley found in Manhattan, Kansas, a three-story hotel, with limestone walls and black-walnut finishing. Still farther west in Kansas he encountered a tavern whose food supplies included two whisky barrels, two decanters, several glasses, three or four cans of pickled oysters, and two or three boxes of sardines; even bread was lacking.<sup>70</sup>

Denver's first hotel was the Denver House, a structure, sixty feet by thirty feet, of rough-hewn log walls and a slanting skeleton roof covered with canvas. It had neither floor nor ceiling, and its partitions were canvas nailed on frames seven feet high. The front part was occupied by the bar and by a dozen gambling tables; then a space for taking meals; and behind this six sleeping apartments. Outside, there was a kitchen under canvas. The hotel's only furnishings were gambling and other tables, benches, and chairs, all of rough boards. The bedsteads were of board, without mattresses or pillows. The only sanitary facilities were tin washbasins which the guests filled from barrels in the passageway and emptied on the floor when they had finished washing.<sup>71</sup> The El Dorado—another log building—was built in February, 1859, and the Pollack House in April.<sup>72</sup> By 1860 there were eight hotels and seven boarding-houses.<sup>73</sup> In the winter of 1859-60 the "Denver House" was enlarged and renamed the "Elephant House," offering food, drinks, shelter, and gambling facilities.<sup>74</sup> At the Broadwell House—a large wooden structure—Richardson enjoyed "tolerable accommodations at Astor House prices."<sup>75</sup>

<sup>69</sup> Gladstone, pp. 151 ff.

<sup>70</sup> *Overland Journey*, pp. 58 and 74.

<sup>71</sup> Villard, *Memoirs of Henry Villard* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin & Co., 1904), I, 123; Greeley, *Overland Journey*, pp. 162-63.

<sup>72</sup> Villard, *Past and Present*, pp. 15-16.

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 132.

<sup>74</sup> G. F. Willison, *Here They Dug the Gold* (New York: Brentano's, 1931), p. 82.

<sup>75</sup> P. 297.

In Salt Lake City the Salt Lake House, a large pent-roofed structure, offered fair accommodations at very moderate charges,<sup>76</sup> and there were other hotels.<sup>77</sup> In the winter of 1859-60 the most pretentious stopping place on the way between California and Nevada was the "Strawberry Hotel" at Strawberry, just inside California. It was a large log house with an immense room with a fireplace. In the main room 300, and in the smaller room (less than twenty feet square) 40 or more, guests slept in their blankets on the floor. Guests dined on beans, potatoes, bread, and coffee, served in tin dishes. Virginia City, Nevada, had a canvas "hotel," whose furniture, besides a bar, consisted of an old sluice box, a dozen tin cups, a pitcher, and a barrel of hard liquor.<sup>78</sup>

The first hotel in San Francisco after the gold rush was the Parker House in 1849, closely followed by the St. Francis and the Union Hotel. The Ward House was built in 1850, the Oriental (a four-story frame building) in 1851. The first brick hotel was the International, erected in 1851-52; the American Exchange (1854) was a fireproof frame building and, with 130 rooms, was the largest. These were followed by the Cosmopolitan in 1859, the Occidental in 1861, and the Lick House. The miners themselves preferred to patronize humbler houses—their favorite in the middle fifties was the "What Cheer House," where a room (not private) could be had for 50 cents.<sup>79</sup> In the mining towns the "hotels" were made of planks nailed together and were rather "ephemeral" in appearance.<sup>80</sup>

<sup>76</sup> Bancroft, *Utah*, pp. 581-82.

<sup>77</sup> Kenderdine mentions the "Empire" and the "New World" (pp. 109-10).

<sup>78</sup> Glasscock, pp. 62 and 73.

<sup>79</sup> Williamson, pp. 85-91; see also Sutherland (p. 13) and Soulé, Gihon, and Nisbet (pp. 647-52). According to the latter writers, the rates were fairly constant between 1849 and 1854 at \$2.00-\$10.00 a day, but apparently a few years later \$2.00 was the more usual charge (cf. Sutherland).

<sup>80</sup> Sutherland, p. 81. The American House and the Hotel Française, at Union (now Arcata), California, and the Humboldt House, in Eureka, charged \$9.00 a week for board and lodging (\$8.00 for board only), \$1.50 a day, or \$0.50 for single meals (advertisements in *The Northern Californian* [Union], November 30, 1859, reproduced in George R. Stewart, Jr., *Bret Harte: Argonaut and Exile* [Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1931], facing p. 80).



In the early fifties the only real hotel in Los Angeles was the Bella Union, a one-story adobe enlarged in 1858 to two stories. In 1856 two more hotels were built, the Lafayette Hotel on Main Street, and the United States.<sup>81</sup> In Santa Fe the United States Hotel was a long low adobe, with whitewashed walls and earthen floors. Its guests dined on a long, not very clean, pine table, sitting on wooden benches and using earthenware plates and ill-made cutlery.<sup>82</sup>

## BOARDING-HOUSES

Clearly there were few whose incomes permitted them to live regularly in hotels, but there do appear to have been a considerable number of people, both married and single, who lived in boarding-houses.<sup>83</sup> In such cities as New York these boarding-houses were likely to be mansions formerly occupied by the wealthy and left vacant by the removal of their owners to locations farther from the downtown districts.<sup>84</sup> These mansions

<sup>81</sup> Newmark, pp. 25-26; Charles Dwight Willard, *History of Los Angeles City* (Los Angeles: Kingsley-Barnes & Neuner Co., 1901), p. 297.

<sup>82</sup> Brewerton, pp. 585-86.

<sup>83</sup> See "Wanted—a Boarding-House," *Harper's Weekly*, I (October 10, 1857), 652, suggested by T. Butler Gunn's *The Physiology of New York Boarding Houses* (New York: Mason Bros., 1857).

It is interesting to see how many boarding-houses are listed in the metropolitan city directories. These listings are probably far from complete, but the total for Boston was 122 (*Boston Almanac*, 1860, p. 107), and the numbers in other cities correspondingly large: e.g., *Directory of the Cities of Albany and Rensselaer*, 1860 (Albany: Adams, Sampson & Co., 1860), pp. 146-47; *Buffalo Directory*, 1859 [Buffalo: E. R. Jewett], pp. 314-15; *Central New York Business Directory*, 1861 (New York: Thomas Hutchinson, 1861), pp. 45-46. *The St. Louis Business Directory for the Years 1854-5* ([St. Louis: Chambers & Knapp, 1854], pp. 216-17) lists nearly 150 boarding-houses; *The Louisville City Directory and Business Mirror for 1858-9* ([Louisville: Hurd & Barrows], p. 475) lists 32; *Cohen's New Orleans Directory for 1855* ([New Orleans: Office of the *Picayune*, 1855], p. 250) lists 12. There is no such concrete evidence for small towns, but it appears that they, too, had their boarding-houses.

<sup>84</sup> Some of the textile mills in New England cities provided a conspicuous exception. Robert Everest wrote of Lawrence, Massachusetts, about 1855: "Fronting one side of a factory that I entered at Lawrence was a handsome and clean range of red brick houses, with green venetians to the windows. In one of them that I was shown over, was a room which may serve as a sample of the rest. It was about fourteen feet square, and eight feet high, and in this were three beds, occupied, at night, by six of the factory girls, or young ladies, as I should better term them. The rooms, the beds, and bedding, appeared scrupulously clean. There was, besides, a parlour or saloon, and a dining-room,

first gave way to boarding-houses; then, as the city encroached upon them still more intensively, the rooms were partitioned off, and the houses became tenant-houses. As long as they were occupied as boarding-houses they were "a real blessing to the industrious poor,"<sup>85</sup> providing convenient locations at moderate rents. There was a tendency, however, to let them fall into disrepair.

Our customary informants, the visitors from abroad, for the most part lived in the best hotels, and few of them were able to be very specific about boarding-houses. One who did come into closer contact with the working classes was J. D. Burns. According to him the boarding-house tables were well spread: tea and coffee for breakfast, in winter hot buckwheat cakes with butter and molasses, plain and fancy bread, fried potatoes, beef steaks, mutton and pork chops, ham, pickles, and preserved fruits. No meal lacked animal food, and fruit pies were an everyday dish. In some of the eastern "counties" pork and beans and pork and cabbage were common.<sup>86</sup>

Burns put the cost of board for a workingman (not including laundry, but apparently including lodging) at from \$4.00 to \$7.00 a week.<sup>87</sup> This was in 1865, when prices were higher than they had been before the war. Hancock, whose book was published in 1860, put the charge for board at "respectable houses" at from \$4.00 to \$6.00;<sup>88</sup> and Olmsted told of a New Orleans workingman, paying \$4.00 a week board in that city, who had

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common to all, on the ground floor. The landlady informed me that each lady paid for board, lodging, and washing 1½ dollar (5s. 2½d.) per week, to which the company, or owner of the factory, added 18 cents (9d.) more to insure the good treatment of their work people" (p. 27); see also Weld (pp. 50-53) for a description of the factory boarding-houses at Lowell.

These carefully supervised boarding-houses for the young women employed in New England textile mills were becoming much less common by the fifties (cf. Norman J. Ware, *The Industrial Worker, 1840-1860* [Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1924], p. 153).

<sup>85</sup> New York Legislature, Assembly, *Report of Select Committee Appointed To Examine into the Condition of Tenant Houses in New-York and Brooklyn* ("Documents of the Assembly of the State of New York," No. 205 [80th sess., 1857]), pp. 11-12.

<sup>86</sup> P. 8.

<sup>87</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>88</sup> P. 84.

paid only \$3.00 in New York.<sup>89</sup> These are all higher than the rates reported to the 1860 Census (see Appen. E, Tables 39 and 40). The Massachusetts Bureau of Labor, from reports received from a number of sources, estimated the cost of board in Massachusetts in 1860 as averaging \$2.79 for men and \$1.79 for women.<sup>90</sup> In Chicago, in 1853, board and lodging for a single man varied from \$2.25 to \$3.00 a week.<sup>91</sup> Eugene Bandel reported that the price of board and lodging in San Bernardino, California, was \$9.00 a week in June, 1859;<sup>92</sup> and in general the rates in the Far West seem to have been much higher than those in the East.

Some idea of the cost of board in the South may be drawn from the estimated or actual cost of board to college students. At the University of Virginia, 1860-61, the cost of board for the year, not including room, laundry, or other expenses, was \$130. At Hampden-Sydney the cost was \$108, and at Randolph-Macon \$120.<sup>93</sup> Nashville Academy, in 1854, charged \$75 for five months' board, but this included room, lights, fire, and laundry.<sup>94</sup> In Alabama the monthly cost of board at Howard College was \$12, and at the University of Alabama, 1860-61, an estimated \$13.<sup>95</sup>

#### RESTAURANTS

Of the many restaurants in New York City, Delmonico's was the one which achieved the most enduring fame, although there were others almost equally fashionable—Maillard's, Reeve's, the

<sup>89</sup> *Seaboard Slave States*, pp. 587-88. The difference was ascribed to the fact that people in New Orleans lived more luxuriously.

<sup>90</sup> Massachusetts, Bureau of Labor and Industries, *Annual Report for the Year 1879*, p. 81.

<sup>91</sup> Pierce, II, 464.

<sup>92</sup> P. 289.

<sup>93</sup> C. O. Johnson, "Higher Education in Virginia" (unpublished M.A. thesis, Department of Education, University of Chicago, 1921), citing college catalogues.

<sup>94</sup> *Southern Business Directory and General Commercial Advertiser*, 1854 (Charleston: Walker & James, 1854), p. 71.

<sup>95</sup> Boyd, pp. 140 and 152.

Maison-Dorée, the Casa Reilly.<sup>96</sup> The most ornate and pretentious was Taylor's Saloon, which served mostly light refreshments and which, while more popular, lacked the prestige of such restaurants as Delmonico's.<sup>97</sup> Quite another type was the House of Refreshment, kept by Daniel Sweeney, picturesquely described by Herbert Asbury.<sup>98</sup>

The ordinary restaurants of the fifties have vanished without a trace, although there were hundreds of them (including the quick lunches—a product of this decade),<sup>99</sup> and it was probably a very small town which did not have at least one. West of the Mississippi one was dependent upon the hospitality of settlers, unless one was traveling by stage and so could share the limited fare at the stage stations. Denver, by the latter part of the summer of 1859, had several excellent eating-houses charging only 75 cents a meal (not long before it had been \$1.50–\$2.50).<sup>100</sup> Virginia City, Nevada, had nine restaurants by 1860–61, as well as eight hotels and boarding-houses; there the miners were demanding, and getting, oysters and cavier and champagne.<sup>101</sup> In Los Angeles, Harris Newmark used to take his meals at La Rue's restaurant. He paid \$9.00 a week for three meals a day, dining in a mud-floored room, whose furniture consisted of a dozen cheap wooden tables, chairs, dirty tablecloths, and homely tableware. The flies were thick.<sup>102</sup> San Francisco had several first-class French restaurants by the early sixties.<sup>103</sup>

#### TENEMENT HOUSES

*Tenement houses in New York.*—The rapid growth in the urban population of industrial workers brought with it, as one result, a terrific pressure upon the housing available to that class. The resulting overcrowding, with great masses living in miserable

<sup>96</sup> See Batcheler, p. 52; Sala, I, 56–57; Henry A. Murray, p. 10.

<sup>97</sup> See Pairpont, p. 30; Batcheler, p. 52; Isabella Bishop, pp. 353–54.

<sup>98</sup> *Sucker's Progress*, p. 189.

<sup>99</sup> Pierce, II, 464 n.

<sup>100</sup> Villard, *Past and Present*, p. 130.

<sup>102</sup> P. 28.

<sup>101</sup> Glasscock, pp. 74–75.

<sup>103</sup> Sutherland, p. 63.

tenements, cellars, and attics, was like nothing before or since in American history.<sup>104</sup>

The report of the select committee of the New York Assembly classified the tenement houses into three categories: those which had been aristocratic mansions, churches, or other buildings originally intended for nonresidential use, built before the spread of the congested area; tenement houses erected in the rear of business buildings; and specially erected tenement buildings. Those which had been mansions had been partitioned without regard to light or ventilation, and the houses were filled from cellar to garret. Entire blocks of buildings worn out in

<sup>104</sup> There is an abundance of data on tenement conditions in New York City, beginning with John H. Griscom, *The Sanitary Condition of the Laboring Population of New York* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1845), and C. E. Norton, "Dwellings and Schools for the Poor," *North American Review*, LXXIV (1852), 464-89. Among official investigations the Assembly report cited on p. 168 and the New York State, Legislature, Senate, *Report of Selected Committee Appointed To Investigate the Health Department of the City of New York* ("Documents of the Senate of the State of New York," No. 49 [82d sess., 1859]) contain much information. There is a number of books dealing directly or indirectly with the problem, among them J. A. Duganne, *The Tenant-House* (New York: Robert M. DeWitt, 1858); Charles Loring Brace, *The Dangerous Classes of New York* (New York: Wynkoop & Hallenback, 1872); and Samuel B. Halliday, *The Lost and Found: Or Life among the Poor* (New York: Blakeman & Mason, 1859). A review of Halliday's book in the *Atlantic Monthly* (V [1860], 119-21) also contains much information. The "semifictional" book of Solon Robinson, *Hot Corn* (New York: DeWitt & Davenport, 1854) contains some vivid descriptions of conditions in Cow Bay, which was demolished in 1859 and the inhabitants driven out "like rats" (*Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, IX [December 23, 1859], 50). Herbert Asbury's *The Gangs of New York* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1927) also contains some vivid descriptions. For the legal aspects see the two books by Lawrence Veiller, *Tenement House Legislation in New York, 1852-1900* (Albany: Brandow Printing Co., 1900) and *Tenement House Reform in New York, 1834-1900* (New York: Evening Post, 1900). Information is also to be found in editorials in newspapers and the illustrated weeklies, in the city inspector's reports, and in reports of the Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor.

As a result of the failure of official agencies to take effective action against slum conditions the Citizens' Association of the city appointed a "Council of Hygiene and Public Health" which presented in 1865 a *Report upon the Sanitary Condition of the City* (New York, D. Appleton & Co.), based upon investigations made under the direction of the city's leading physicians. That *Report* presents a detailed mass of evidence, including much about tenement-house conditions. A summary of the report in a more readable form is contained in Stephen Smith, *The City That Was* (New York: F. Allaben, 1911).

There is less information accessible on Boston tenements, but a *Report of the Committee on Internal Health* is quoted in part in Norton (pp. 172-73); see also Boston, Committee on the Expediency of Providing Better Tenements for the Poor, *Report* (Boston: Eastburne Press, 1846). The problem in Providence is commented upon in the *First Annual Report of the Superintendent of Health (for the year ending July 1, 1857)* (Providence: Knowles, Anthony, & Co., 1857).

other service were let in hundreds of subdivided apartments at rates high enough to cover the subsequent abuse to the property and still provide a substantial return. These buildings were likely to be dilapidated, the walls oozing moisture, and the plaster falling off to lay bare the laths. In these apartments the rents ranged from \$4.00 to \$6.00 a month in front, and from \$6.00 to \$8.00 in the rear. Cellars were let;<sup>105</sup> and in one building the first floor was used as a sailor's lodging-house, with bunks ranged one above the other. One church had been partitioned into 85 apartments, which were occupied by more than 100 families—310 persons. Its cellar occupants paid \$3.00 a month; and sheds in the rear rented for \$3.00 a month each.

The tenement houses erected in the rear of business buildings were merely a "collection of mouldy walls." The buildings built for tenement houses were cheaply constructed for speculation. They usually consisted of double buildings, the front having two suites on each floor, cellar to garret, with windows front and back. Bedrooms were dark, and there were closets in the center. The rear house was in the back yard, entered by an alley. Privies in many cases were below the dwelling-rooms, in the cellar or under the pavement, with the stench coming through the windows in hot weather. All had narrow, unlit passages and stairs. The usual rate for a room and a dark bedroom was from \$5.00 to \$6.50 a month. "Model" tenement houses were a little better designed as to ventilation and fire escapes; but they, too, had inadequate drainage, water supply, and other facilities, and frequently failed to offer enough privacy.

The committee found one "model" tenement having 96 apartments [i.e., rooms?] which housed 146 families—577 persons—with an average of 6 persons to a single ten-by-twelve room.<sup>106</sup> In one block there were 200 families, averaging 5 per-

<sup>105</sup> Sometimes the proprietor of a rooming-cellar furnished board. His food supply—the collections made by women and children whom he employed to beg for food—was placed on a common table; and, after the boarders who had paid a few cents daily had selected their food, those who paid less than two cents for board and sleeping space were entitled to the leftover fragments (Ware, pp. 15-17, cited by Cummings, pp. 79-80).

<sup>106</sup> A notable example of "model" tenements was Gotham Court, which the *New York Evening Post* described (August 20, 1850) as a praiseworthy example. This build-

sons each, without ventilation, light, or water. Another tenement of 85 apartments housed 310 persons, with some rooms vacant. In the Seventeenth Ward there were 1,257 tenements, housing 10,123 families in 20,917 rooms: there were 35,954 adults and 15,228 children—31½ persons to the house. There were 426 rear buildings, with from 4 to 45 families in each. In the Fourth Ward there were 1,139 houses, of which 452 were tenements, each having from 4 to 94 families.

These conditions did not improve. In 1864, according to the report of the Citizens' Association, there were 495,592 persons in New York City (then only Manhattan Island) living in tenements and cellars; there were 15,309 tenements, averaging more than 7 families each. Attics, stable lofts, cellars, and similar accommodations also housed a large part of the city's population. "Far more than half the population of the city" was living in the worst sort of slums. The Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor estimated that in 1859 New York City's cellar population was 20,000, as compared with 29,000 in 1850. This decrease it accounted for by an increase in the tenement population.<sup>107</sup> Two miles on both sides of Fifth Avenue would contain 400 families, a single block of tenements 700 families.<sup>108</sup>

*Tenement houses in other cities.*—While tenement conditions in Brooklyn do not seem to have become serious by 1860, housing in Boston, Providence, and other industrial cities was little better than that of New York. The tenement-house problem, as distinguished from the housing problem in its broadest sense, was peculiar to the industrial cities. Overcrowding and inadequate housing were problems confronting all the cities. Even in Charleston two-story brick tenements were coming into use.<sup>109</sup>

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ing is described by Asbury (*Gangs of New York*, pp. 47-48) and in the report of the Citizens' Association (pp. 49-55) as a particularly bad example of all the worst features of tenements, housing more than 1,000 persons.

<sup>107</sup> *Annual Report*, 1859.

<sup>108</sup> *Atlantic Monthly*, VI, 119-21.

<sup>109</sup> American Medical Association, Committee on Public Hygiene, p. 585. The same report comments on overcrowding in Louisville (pp. 614-15) and other cities, as early as 1849.

*Efforts at reform.*—There were, from time to time, attempts to alleviate tenement-house conditions by the erection of buildings which would provide decent accommodations at a price the poor could afford to pay. These dwellings, in Boston and New York, met the problem for those who could become their tenants,<sup>110</sup> but the projects were too small in scale to have any effect on the situation as a whole. Attempts at reform had accomplished almost nothing. As a result of tenement conditions New York had the highest death rate of all American cities, nearly twice that of London, although the rate for the country at large was probably not more than half that of England.<sup>111</sup>

#### THE HOUSING PROBLEM: SOME REASONS

*Immigration.*—The immigrants who came to this country in such great numbers after 1845 to a very great degree stayed in the regions close to where they landed. Many of them had no money to get farther, and others preferred to stay where there were people from the same country, to whom they were drawn by ties of kinship, language, and associations. Those who had been farmers in Europe frequently found it easier to work as unskilled laborers than to become farmers in the United States, where crops and conditions were so different; work was easiest to find in the cities of the Northeast, where expanding industry could absorb more and more labor.

In these cities the rapid growth in the numbers of those in the poorest class of the population far outran the growth in housing accommodations. Had the immigration been halted for any length of time, a new "equilibrium" might have been reached; but, with immigration continuing, by the time new houses could be built the population had increased still more. It is to be remembered, too, that these immigrants, who brought little with them and were paid low wages, could afford to pay only very small rents. Since expansion into the suburbs was impossible

<sup>110</sup> C. E. Norton, "Model Lodging Houses in Boston," *Atlantic Monthly*, V (1860), 673-80; see also New York Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor, *Thirteenth Annual Report* (1856), pp. 45-46, and subsequent reports.

<sup>111</sup> A. C. Cole, p. 182.



because of the lack of rapid transportation, the overcrowding was inevitable.<sup>112</sup>

*The servant problem.*—One way of finding out why Americans so often lived in hotels and boarding-houses would be to find out what explanations were given at the time. It is interesting to see that at least six<sup>113</sup> of the two dozen Europeans who found this tendency on the part of the Americans of the fifties worthy of comment explained it as a result of the servant problem—an explanation which must have come from American informants. Two<sup>114</sup> of these six also thought that the high rents had something to do with it. The high rents, of course, were simply a product of rapid urbanization—of demand outrunning supply in housing.

The servant-problem explanation was perhaps accepted a little too readily by these travelers from abroad, with their background of a permanent servant class, content to work for low wages and to devote themselves obsequiously to their masters' wishes. There had never been such a servant class in the United States. Domestic service had from the first been regarded as degrading, and servants had to be paid what were, for the time, high wages. Far from being obsequious, they retained their independence; at times, indeed, they seemed overbearing. At the first opportunity they quit to work for themselves.<sup>115</sup> With immigration, the Irish or German "servant" or "hired" girl was replacing the native "help," but the Irish girl frequently tried the

<sup>112</sup> It is true that urbanization would have resulted in some overcrowding, even without the influx of immigrants, but I think it is unlikely that urbanization alone would have proceeded fast enough to produce tenement conditions. The relation between immigration and overcrowding was recognized at the time (see, e.g., Boston City Council, Joint Special Committee on the Census of 1855, *Report: Including the Report of the Censors, with Analytical and Sanitary Observations* [Boston: Moore & Crosby, 1856]).

<sup>113</sup> Baxter, p. 90; Isabella Bishop, pp. 98–99; Hancock, pp. 26–27; Mackay, pp. 32–33; Amelia Murray, p. 165; Pairpont, pp. 26–27.

<sup>114</sup> Pairpont and Mrs. Bishop.

<sup>115</sup> On this point see also Isabella Bishop, p. 357; Burns, pp. 81–84; Parker Gillmore, *Prairie Farms and Prairie Folk* (London: Hurst & Blackett, 1872), I, 199; Phillippo, pp. 111–12; Pulszky, I, 62; and Rhys, p. 81.

For an amusing treatment of the servant problem see the series of cartoons, "Miseries of Mistresses," in *Harper's Magazine*, XIII (1856), 746–47, and XIV (1857), 385–86.

patience of her employers.<sup>116</sup> To those who could afford servants, the servant problem seemed an important one.<sup>117</sup> Only the wealthy kept servants, and they but few, according to European standards:

Wealthy families of the East sometimes maintained more than one house servant, but the greater number counted themselves eminently respectable with cook, maid, and house girl all in one, and the pay was one or two dollars a week. Liveries . . . persisted mainly in the very exclusive circles of Philadelphia and New York, in Washington, and on the great plantations.<sup>118</sup>

While it is possible that some people who would have preferred to maintain their own homes, because of the servant problem lived instead at a boarding-house or hotel—while this is possible, it was nothing new and cannot have applied to any considerable proportion of the population. It is the sort of explanation—like high taxes, for instance—that someone, momentarily annoyed or disgusted and perhaps unaware of the real reasons for his mode of living, might give.

Nevertheless, the servant problem, unimportant as an explanation of housing characteristics, is an interesting sidelight into American economic conditions and American ways of thinking. Gratton believed the consensus in the United States was that the “help” were not very helpful. He was satisfied that, if they were well treated, the native Americans made the best servants even though they were independent, demanded time for their own uses, and failed to give notice when about to leave. There was never any bond of attachment between servant and family or any confidence of the family in their servants. The employers’ consciousness of their own superiority, he thought, prevented any ease of manner between master and servant; there was less restraint when the servants were Irish, but the

<sup>116</sup> A. C. Cole, p. 169. Carl Sandburg (*Abraham Lincoln: The Prairie Years* [New York: Harcourt, Brace & Co., 1926], II, 274) mentions Mrs. Lincoln’s difficulties with her Irish girls.

<sup>117</sup> See, e.g., Bayard Taylor’s letter to R. H. Stoddard, August 11, 1864 (Marie Hansen-Taylor and Horace E. Scudder [eds.], *Life and Letters of Bayard Taylor* [5th ed.; Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1895], II, 423).

<sup>118</sup> Dodd, *Expansion and Conflict*, p. 209. (The wages may be compared with those given below, and with Appen. B, Table 19.) Mrs. Bishop was surprised to find that in the largest houses in New York there were only two or three female servants (p. 357).

Irish were untrained and not adapted to discipline, frequently changing employers. Colored men were not employed as permanent house servants in the North and East, but the extra attendants at parties were usually Negroes. The Negroes, Gratton wrote, were not so indifferent and independent as the native whites or so bustling and fidgety as the Irish.

There were no housekeepers or ladies' maids; the lady of the house attended to the housekeeper's duties, and the seamstress and chamber girl to those of the maid. Nursery governesses were unknown, and the ladies did much to assist their servants. "Ladies keeping houses in America are indeed little better than upper servants." Husbands invariably did the marketing, and the cooks did nothing aside from the actual preparation of the meals. When walking on the streets the servants were scarcely to be distinguished from their masters, and they used their employers' homes for their own parties. The ordinary waiter received \$25.00 a month, a cook \$3.00 or \$4.00 a week, and a seamstress or chamber girl \$2.00 or \$2.50 a week.<sup>119</sup>

<sup>119</sup> Gratton, I, chap. xv. Mrs. I. C. Duncan, in *America as I Found It* (New York: Robert Carter & Bros., 1852], pp. 209-29), also discusses American servants at some length.

Gratton's statement about the employment of Negroes is confirmed by the Census returns: only 119 Negro men were employed as servants in Massachusetts (Massachusetts, Secretary of the Commonwealth, *Abstract of the Census of Massachusetts, 1860, from the Eighth United States Census* [Boston: Wright & Potter, 1863], pp. 356-57).

It is difficult to write with any assurance about servants' wages over the country. *Harper's Weekly* in an editorial on May 9, 1857 (I, 289-90) put the wage of a nurse or housemaid at \$8.00 a month, of a cook at \$10.00 a month. An article entitled "The New York Labor Market: Female House-Servants" in the same periodical for July 4, 1857 (I, 418-19) stated that, despite Irish and German immigration, wages were higher, especially in the cheaper grades, by about 25 per cent and up. In 1856 a maid-of-all-work could have been employed for \$4.00, but the servants preferred work in the city. The rates quoted were:

<i>Maid of all work:</i>	<i>Cooks:</i>
Very raw.....\$4.00 a month	Good.....\$ 6.00
Average..... 5.00	Extra..... 12.00-\$16.00
Good..... 6.00-\$7.00	<i>Laundresses:</i> ..... 8.00- 10.00
<i>Chambermaids:</i>	
Good..... 6.00	

In Chicago in 1860 seamstresses averaged \$3.00 or \$4.00 a week. Wages for domestics were never high, reaching only \$1.50-\$1.75 in 1858; in that year hotels paid \$1.50 a week (Pierce, II, 154). Hancock, whose book was published in 1860, said that general servants were scarce at less than \$6.00 a month, cooks at twice as much (p. 86); see also Appen. B, Table 19.

In the South most of the house servants were slaves.<sup>120</sup> Coachmen, house servants, seamstresses, ladies' maids, cooks, barbers, and hairdressers were commonly purchasable, and occasionally mantua-makers and tailors.<sup>121</sup> In establishments where there were more than twenty slaves, at least one was set aside as a house servant, and the very young and the very old were usually engaged in the house. In some families the household retinue was large: a cook and her assistant, a uniformed butler, a personal maid, a "boy" to serve the master, a nurse if there were children, a liveried coachman, a gardener, and a stableboy. Most genteel and middle-class families turned over the care of their children to Negro nurses.<sup>122</sup>

Slaves as house servants were the subject of frequent complaint.<sup>123</sup> Abbott left Mobile with the opinion that white girls were supplanting colored help in domestic service;<sup>124</sup> and it is certainly true that "destitute females" frequently resorted to domestic service, laundering, and sewing, usually at very small wages.<sup>125</sup> Olmsted reported that a Virginia plantation-owner hired Irish girls as housemaids, paying them \$3.00 and \$6.00 a month. An instance was told him of a woman in a southern city who had hired a slave as servant, but the slave had refused to perform some ordinary light duty—good service was to be obtained only by force or threat of force. He later visited a Georgia rice plantation, where he reported that the house servants were more intelligent, understanding, and better in performing their duties than any he had seen before. Their labor was light, and

<sup>120</sup> The male domestic servants in Charleston, in 1848, included 1,888 slaves, 9 freed Negroes, and 13 whites; the female domestics, 3,384 slaves, 28 freed Negroes, and 100 whites (J. L. Dawson and H. W. Saussure, *Census of Charleston for 1848* [Charleston, 1849], quoted in Phillips, *American Negro Slavery*, p. 403).

<sup>121</sup> Frederick Bancroft, *Slave-trading in the Old South* (Baltimore: J. H. Furst Co., 1931), *passim*.

<sup>122</sup> Johnson, *Ante-bellum North Carolina*, pp. 83 and 252-53.

<sup>123</sup> Gratton, I, 257-58.

<sup>124</sup> P. 113. Hotels and other institutions requiring large retinues of servants hired white (usually Irish) servants, because of the amount of capital that would have had to be invested in slaves. The St. Charles Hotel is an instance (R. Russell, p. 254).

<sup>125</sup> Johnson, *Ante-bellum North Carolina*, p. 247.

they were treated with more consideration than that usually given free domestics.<sup>126</sup>

In the West the demand for labor, relative to the supply, was even greater than in the rest of the country, and only the fact that there were few families of sufficient means to hire servants kept the problem from becoming acute. It was difficult to find good servants even in Indiana.<sup>127</sup> In Salt Lake City servants commanded wages of \$30-\$40 a month.<sup>128</sup> In Colorado it was next to impossible to find servants at any price, except Indian squaws.<sup>129</sup> In Benecia, California, maidservants, and employed women were getting from \$25 to \$40 a month and board in 1859.<sup>130</sup> In Virginia City, Nevada, Chinese were employed for laundering, house service, cooking, and similar duties.<sup>131</sup>

*Other reasons.*—Of all the people who were not living in one-family homes, by far the largest part were those whom poverty compelled to live in the city slums. The simple explanation that the city populations were growing faster than housing accommodations could be increased and that these people did not have sufficient earning power to avail themselves of better housing is enough to account for their hardship. But for those better off—the families who were living in boarding-houses—I think the “high-rent” and “servant-problem” lines of explanation are totally inadequate. They would not have hired domestic servants anyway; and, as for the rents, it was not a question of the rent’s being too high for them to pay so much as it was of its being higher than they were *willing* to pay.

It seems to me that this is just one more illustration of the fact that the home and the pleasures of the home were coming to mean less and less to the urban population. They preferred living in boarding-houses to having their own homes but having

<sup>126</sup> *Seaboard Slave States*, pp. 99, 194, and 421. Olmsted reported servants’ wages (i.e., hire paid for use of slaves) for housework at Austin, Texas, as from \$7.00 to \$10.00. The same labor in the North would have been paid only \$4.00 (*Texas Journey*, p. 120).

<sup>127</sup> Pulszky, II, 9.

<sup>129</sup> Greeley, *Recollections*, p. 365.

<sup>128</sup> Burton, pp. 388-89.

<sup>130</sup> Bandel, p. 301.

<sup>131</sup> Clemens, *Roughing It*, II, 129-30. Histories of California indicate that the Chinese were similarly employed in that state.

less money left over to spend outside. There was a general spirit of restlessness, an unwillingness to tie themselves down, which was to become much more evident in the day of the motorcar and the apartment house. Then, as now, there were people who could find little pleasure in their work or in their homes, who thought that enjoyment was to be found in freedom from responsibility and in purchased amusement. The difference is that in 1860 there was only a small part of the population of whom that was true, while today it sometimes appears to be true of the greater part.

## CHAPTER VII

### CLOTHING AND PERSONAL CARE

#### FASHIONS OF THE FIFTIES

*Styles in men's clothing.*—Much earlier in the century men's clothing had lost its color and elaborateness. Among all classes it had become dark in color and simple in cut. Men had been slow to accept long trousers, but by the fifties the change was complete. Trousers were usually narrow, and among the more fashionable men striped trousers were the rule. Although the double-breasted coat of black broadcloth was becoming increasingly popular, the height of fashion for morning as well as for evening wear was a long coat—either the Prince Albert or frock coat or the cutaway (a short coat with long tails and large pockets in the tails). A more colorful note was struck by the waistcoats or vests, which were varicolored, frequently of the richest satins and velvets, brocaded or embroidered. Velvet was the favorite material, with figured cashmere next in popularity. The less foppish were more likely to wear white or cream-colored waistcoats or even white-poplin vests. The high stock was disappearing from use (except in Congress, where men still wore the stock, with a black dress coat and a black satin waistcoat), but collars were high, worn with flowing silk or muslin cravats. In the fifties there appeared a strange style of overcoat, hanging loose and full from the shoulder, reaching to the knees, closed with four buttons. Its sleeves were close to the top, open and full at the bottom. A high silk hat completed the daytime costume of the well-dressed man. For evening, men wore a black costume, including the swallow-tailed coat. The tie was of bright soft silk, cut in ample proportions.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Elisabeth McClellan, *Historic Dress in America, 1800-1870* (Philadelphia: George W. Jacobs & Co., 1910), pp. 414, 422-23; Elizabeth Sage, *Study of Costume* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1926), pp. 203-4.

It is possible to exaggerate the dullness of men's clothing in the fifties. Comparing it

Styles for summer wear at seashore and in the country showed more variety. There were light-weight suits of alpaca, nankeen, or foulard in white; and men frequently wore entire suits of white linen. Others wore a dark coat and white flannel trousers, creased at the sides. The hat might be of straw, with turned-up brim and with ribbons hanging in the back.<sup>2</sup>

*Women's fashions.*—Women's fashions were almost as various and as variable in the nineteenth as in the twentieth century,<sup>3</sup> though probably fewer women tried to dress in conformity with them. By 1860 mantles, burnouses with round and square hoods, and ruched, tight sleeves were considered *distingué*, and silk hairnets with bangles of gold or silver braid were "all the rage."<sup>4</sup> In the early fifties a popular mode was the velvet basque (a bodice with short skirt or tails below the waistline) worn with a silk skirt. Another novelty was the black-silk sacque, worn by both matrons and the more youthful: there were both close-fitting and loose styles, with wide sleeves set in low on the shoulders, trimmed with fringes, lace, and ribbon. Bodices were also

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with that of a few years earlier, Arthur H. Cole writes: "Before the Civil War, however, the outward appearance of American society, so to speak, had been transformed; indeed, the pendulum of change had swung to the other extreme. From a drabness which to the modern imagination would be depressing, style and production turned to a fancy, and to us an almost fantastic mood" (*The American Wool Manufacture* [Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1926], I, 298). Cole quotes S. N. D. North as writing: "The ten years ending 1860 will always be remembered as a period when the styles and fabrics for men's wear were of greater variety than ever before or since. Vests were made from brilliant patterned cassimeres, velvets, brocades, and silks, but rarely of the same material of the trousers. These last were plaids, checks, stripes, and mixtures, running largely to light and medium colors, and extravagant in pattern."

<sup>2</sup> Sage, p. 204; cf. Hancock, p. 45.

<sup>3</sup> There is a number of books dealing with feminine fashions of the period, most of them from the antiquarian point of view or for use in stage costuming. I have drawn material from McClellan, pp. 245-61; Sage, pp. 196-203; Oscar Fischel and Max von Boehn, *Modes and Manners of the Nineteenth Century*, trans. M. Edwardes (rev. and enl. ed., London: J. M. Dent & Sons, Ltd.), III, *passim*; Katherine M. Lester, *Historic Costume* (Peoria, Ill.: Manual Arts Press, 1925), pp. 195-99.

Agnes Brooks Young (*Recurring Cycles of Fashion, 1760-1937* [New York: Harper & Bros., 1937]) is rather more interesting than the usual run of histories of fashion, for two reasons: she is more concerned with the typical, street dress, and the book is given coherence by an interesting theoretical framework (see esp. chap. vi, "The Bell-shaped Cycle 1830 through 1867").

<sup>4</sup> Pierce, II, 459.



fashionable. These were tight fitting and very snug at the waist, which was compressed by a corset. The bodice extended four to five inches below the waist and was decorated to match the skirt. The neck, if high, was finished with an embroidered collar, or a vestee of lace or embroidered lawn filled in the front—this was V-shaped or formed a square neck. Chemisettes and undersleeves were still being worn, more or less elaborate for different occasions. Sleeves had broadened at the elbow and were filled in with lace or embroidered undersleeves. These were often trimmed with ruffles to correspond with the skirt, and some were ruffled or puffed from shoulder to wrist. Skirts, meanwhile, had increased in length until they became “long dangling street sweepers.”<sup>5</sup>

An earlier fashion, which remained prominent in the styles throughout the fifties, was the use of flounces and ruffles. Flounces were extremely popular; on some skirts there were as many as five, the upper flounce being gathered in with the skirt at the waist. Gowns of thin material, such as organdy or tarlatan, might have as many as twenty-five. Flounces were used wide and narrow; they might be plain, scalloped, fringed, pleated, or otherwise decorated. Early in the decade the number of ruffles had increased until they covered the entire skirt. This made them extremely heavy, and it became necessary to find some means to hold them out. At the same time the skirt was growing wider, and by 1860 had come to measure a full ten yards, without a corresponding increase in length. These were responsible for the coming-in again of the crinoline and the hoopskirt, so much associated in popular fancy with the styles of the period.

The first step was to make petticoats with casings around them at intervals, into which canes of rateen or whalebone were run.<sup>6</sup> A parallel development was the use of crinoline—a stiff,

<sup>5</sup> The phrase is Arthur C. Cole's (p. 165). Mrs. Cowell and Mrs. Bishop both commented on the fact that the dresses of the fashionable dragged in the street (Disher, pp. 238-39; Isabella Bishop, p. 361).

<sup>6</sup> “In 1856 the underclothing of a lady of fashion consisted of long drawers trimmed with lace, a flannel petticoat, an underpetticoat three and a half yards wide, a petticoat wadded to the knees and stiffened in the upper part with whalebones inserted a hand-

unpliable material, set around the lower edge of the underside of the skirt to keep it sufficiently propped out. The width varied from six to fifteen or more inches; some women had entire petticoats of crinoline. Others wore flounced and stiffened petticoats of coarse muslin. This deep facing of crinoline (or of horsehair "crin"<sup>7</sup>) was almost as heavy as the starched skirts, and style innovators turned to the hoopskirt. But crinolines, instead of being discarded, grew larger and larger, finally measuring ten yards in circumference.

The use of cane or whalebone reinforcements gave way to such refinements as gutta-percha devices and wire frameworks; and just before the middle of the decade the hoopskirt in its more familiar form came in, the typical skirt being made of graduated steel wires covered with a woven cotton netting held together by perpendicular strips of broad tape. The "correct" hoop consisted of four narrow steel hoops, each covered with tape and run into the muslin or calico petticoat. The one nearest the waist measured one and three-quarters yards in length, and the one at the lower edge two and a half yards. With the exception of the top hoop, the hoops did not meet in front, leaving a quarter-yard space. Steel hoops were on the market at five cents a hoop,<sup>7</sup> and by 1860 steel and brass hoops had almost entirely superseded whalebone and rateen.<sup>8</sup>

While these elaborate styles continued into the sixties,<sup>9</sup> the

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breadth from one another, a white starched petticoat with three stiffly starched flounces, two muslin petticoats, and finally the dress" (Fischel and von Boehn, III, 46-47).

<sup>7</sup> A. C. Cole, p. 167.

<sup>8</sup> *Eighth Census: Manufactures*, pp. lxxxv-lxxxvi.

<sup>9</sup> McClellan notes a "tendency for exaggeration" in the fashions prevailing at the end of the decade (p. 256). The whole trend of fashions during the period is explained by Young as one phase—the bell-shaped—of a recurring cycle. "In 1852 it billowed out once more and rapidly developed the size which has made this period famous. At their widest these skirts measured as much as ten yards in circumference, and they were worn over hoops which were not infrequently as wide as their wearers were tall." About 1854 real hoops began to take the place of the innumerable petticoats and horsehair pads. The same tendency was observable in sleeves: in 1846 the bell sleeve first appeared; and that style continued typical for the rest of the cycle, reaching tremendous proportions in the early sixties. The characteristic neckline was neither high nor low; it was a circlet at the base of the neck, usually with a small turned-over collar attached. The typical head-

ruffled dresses had by the end of the fifties given place to paneled skirts in which two materials, a plain and an embossed or brocaded fabric, were combined; and basques with postillion backs became the order of the day. Low necks and lace berthas, which had been made fashionable by Miss Lane (President Buchanan's niece), were worn almost universally, either with open sleeves revealing inner ones of filling lace or with sleeves of the shortest possible form. The low neck with bertha was particularly popular for evening wear.

Washable materials—fine muslins (including India muslins, embroidered in colors), cambrics, and other white stuffs—were exceedingly popular. Silk was a general favorite, and even women of limited means considered their wardrobe incomplete without one silk dress for church, calls, and dress-up occasions. Among the more well-to-do, silks and satins were much used for out-of-door costumes.

In summer, crepe shawls, embroidered and having heavy fringes, were used as wraps, as were squares of white net to imitate lace and wide-bordered black silk shawls. For cold weather mantles of soft cloth, astrakhan, or baby lamb were worn—those of cloth heavily braided or embroidered. Cashmere shawls and inexpensive imitations of them were frequently worn. Tunisian shawls, manufactured from silk refuse and usually worn in stripes of two colors, were worn in summer, and a very graceful wrap—the Algerian burnoose—was introduced and became a favorite for theater wear. This was made of a mixture of silk and goat's hair, and the full-flowing lines of the Arab mantle with a sort of hood finished with a tassel were not ungraceful even over a hoopskirt.

In 1859 young ladies were wearing beaver hats with long ostrich feathers. But the fashionable shape for several years was a shallow crown and soft, wide, drooping brim. Another style, worn on top of a mass of hair, was a "ridiculous" hat, flat, small,

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gear was the familiar bonnet, revived in a new and more demure form (Agnes B. Young, pp. 81-86).

The amount of dress material required by these styles is shown in Table 3 below, based on an estimate by Lucy Barton.

TABLE 3\*

SQUARE YARDS OF MATERIAL REQUIRED FOR COSTUMES OF THE  
WELL-TO-DO IN VARIOUS YEARS

ARTICLE OF CLOTHING	1800	1855	1925
	Woman's Costume		
<i>Underwear:</i>			
Cotton or linen . . . . .	7½	63	3½†
Woolen . . . . .	(4 oz.)	2½	.....
<i>Dress:</i>			
Silk . . . . .	5	30	3-4
Woolen . . . . .	5	15	3-4
Cotton . . . . .	5	30-40	3-4
<i>Wrap:</i>			
Silk . . . . .	5	8	.4
Woolen . . . . .	5	8	4
<i>Stockings:</i>			
Cotton or lisle . . . . .	(2-3 oz.)	(2-3 oz.)	(1-2 oz.)
<i>Shoes:</i>			
Kid	1½	1½-2	1½
<i>Whalebone (yards) . . . . .</i>	7-8	12-15	.....
	Men's Costume		
<i>Underlinen and shirt . . . . .</i>	4-5	4-5	.....
<i>Suit:</i>			
Woolen . . . . .	7½	8	.....
Silk or velvet . . . . .	6½	.....	.....
<i>Stockings:</i>			
Silk or lisle . . . . .	(2-3 oz.)	(1 oz.)	.....
Woolen . . . . .	(4-6 oz.)	(2 oz.)	.....
<i>Shoes (boots):</i>			
Leather . . . . .	2-4	2	.....
<i>Hats:</i>			
Beaver or felt . . . . .	1¼	1½	.....

\* Source: Estimate prepared by Lucy Barton for Robert G. Albion, *The Rise of New York Port (1815-1860)* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1935), p. 417. The estimates for women's clothing in 1855 seem high; certainly they can have no application to the costume of any large number of women.

† Silk.

tip-tilted over the eyes, trimmed with a feather, and with long ribbon streamers down the back; this was covered with a veil reaching only to the nose. Others wore leghorn hats, with wide flopping brims, adorned with wreaths of wild flowers, roses, lilacs, tulips, or with ostrich or marabout feathers. For winter wear, silk bonnets, covered with crepe-lisse, or of silk and blonde, trimmed with velvet flowers, were still fashionable.

Shoes were of black kid, high-heeled and side-laced. Patent leather had been introduced, and some wore gray shoes in warm weather. Fancy stockings, gray with red clocks, for instance, are spoken of.

Evening gloves were of half-length or, as often, reaching half-way to the elbow. Kid or silk gloves with backs embroidered in delicate silk, with now and then a jewel, were used. Gloves, fans, handkerchiefs, and other accessories were imported from foreign houses.

*Styles in children's clothing.*<sup>10</sup>—Pantalets in the fifties were visible only on very small children and under very short skirts. Plaids and graduated stripes were very fashionable for both boys and girls.

In the fifties boys under ten wore for dressy occasions suits of black velvet or velveteen, often with full, short trousers to the knee. After 1854 a Highland costume with kilts became popular for boys of from about five to ten, and, of course, children of perhaps seven to fourteen were often dressed in sailor costumes. Older boys wore long pantaloons about as much as their fathers did, with short, round jackets to match.

In the hoopskirt days (1855-65) little girls of seven and over wore hoopskirts, too, but the decline of pantalets was heralded at the same time. White lingerie blouses were worn very often by young girls. The fashion after 1840 was to make girls' dresses with low or half-low bodices, to be worn over guimpes of white muslin. Skirts were very full and often lined with crinoline or worn over crinoline petticoats, like those of their mothers. Instead of a bodice, an arrangement of bretelles was often worn by little girls. From 1835 to 1870 shoes of morocco or other leather,

<sup>10</sup> McClellan, pp. 312-20,

with cloth tops (called gaiter boots or gaiters) were much worn. A general vogue was the sash of ribbon tied at the back with its long ends reaching to the end of the skirt.

Bonnets and hats were equally popular for girls. Little country girls were likely to wear sunbonnets of calico, stiffened with many rows of cording, in the summertime; in winter quilted hoods were substituted. Infant caps were small and close fitting and were trimmed with ruchings of lace and ribbon.

#### WHAT WAS THE CLOTHING REALLY LIKE?

*Our ignorance of the subject.*—Our first impression might well be that nothing should be easier to find out about than what people were wearing: Aren't we, after all, more aware of people's clothing than we are of, say, their food or their furniture? The answer to this I have suggested in earlier chapters. It is just those things which are most obvious, most taken for granted, that people have the least to say about. To be sure, a great deal has been written about the clothing of various periods, but almost all of it has been concerned with fashions—for our purposes a largely irrelevant topic. Production statistics can throw a great deal of light on food consumption; they would be much less useful as guides to clothing consumption even if we had reason to think they were fairly complete (such things as quality, durability, and sectional differences are almost impossible to allow for). As it is, we know that in the fifties much of the clothing was homemade and so didn't get into the production statistics at all. What we are most interested in is the ordinary wear of the ordinary person—what it was like and how much they had. About this contemporary observers had little to say. It is particularly difficult to learn very much about the clothing of by far the largest part of the population—the farmers and their families.

Clothing is such an important part of consumption as to call for a rather extended treatment. I have tried to supplement what concrete information I could find—chiefly contemporary accounts, production data, and histories of the clothing industry—by drawing upon common knowledge and common sense.

Nevertheless, the gaps are considerable, and some of my generalizations are, I fear, too vague to be enlightening. The best I can do is to indicate where these gaps and these uncertainties are.

*The growth of the clothing industry.*—The historian of the American wool manufacture, Arthur Harrison Cole, emphasizes

TABLE 4\*

## THE GROWTH OF THE AMERICAN WOOL MANUFACTURE

	1837	1840	1845	1849	1859	1869
Woolen Mills						
Number of establishments.....		1,420	1,021	1,559	1,260	2,891
Number of sets.....	1,488		1,730		3,209	8,366
Number of employees.....		21,342		39,252	41,360	80,053
Raw material consumed (millions of pounds).....	31†			71	99	212
Worsted Mills						
Number of establishments.....					3	102
Number of employees.....					2,378	12,920
Raw material consumed (millions of pounds).....					5	22

\* Source: A. H. Cole, I, 268.

† Cole thinks 14,000,000 or 15,000,000 pounds would probably be closer to the fact than the 31,000,000 pounds given in his original source.

the tremendous growth in the factory production of woollen cloth between 1830 and 1870, a growth he explains as due to population changes (growth, westward movement, and urbanization), to improvements in transportation, and to the initiation of the worsted manufacture. Not only was the volume of output increasing, but it was growing in diversity. The early output had been largely black and colored broadcloth, and cassimeres, satinets, flannels, and blankets, and such low-quality cloths as jeans, kerseys, and Negro-cloths, all in solid colors. Now, with the growth of the industry and with the improvements in its technical equipment, hastened by increasing pros-

perity and by increasing differences in income and by the rise of the wholesale clothing industry, the whole nature of the industry was changing. The use of satinets, linseys, and similar textiles was declining, and even broadcloths were losing out, while fancy cassimeres—which were both cheaper and fancier—were becoming more and more popular. The technical difficulties in making worsteds were only just overcome in 1860, and comparatively little was made for men's clothing, most of it being imported.<sup>11</sup>

In most parts of the country, and especially in the North, spinning and weaving in the home had disappeared, and the picturesque garments of earlier days had been replaced by factory cottons and woolens. There was some domestic manufacturing in the South and West, but it seems not to have been very important after the forties.<sup>12</sup>

Technical improvements had not been limited to the manufacture of cloth. The manufacture of sewing machines was becoming a big business in itself; and as a result of its use the manufacture of ready-made clothing was rapidly expanding. During the fifties the output of the men's clothing industry was increasing, while the number of establishments was decreasing—the result, according to the author of the Census report, of business combinations resulting from the use of the sewing machine.<sup>13</sup> “The vast demand,” he wrote, “for ready-made apparel of moderate cost has developed an enormous and growing trade.”<sup>14</sup> In the West, Ohio's commissioner of statistics was reporting a notable increase in clothing manufacturing in that

<sup>11</sup> American woolen production was made up mostly of such goods as could be easily manufactured in large quantities. Large numbers of flannel blankets, of good quality, were being made, and flannel underwear and shirts were much worn.

<sup>12</sup> A. H. Cole, I, 279–85; cf. V. S. Clark, I, 439. In New York State the domestic manufacture of fulled cloth declined from 2,918,000 yards in 1825 to 198,000 yards in 1855; of flannel and other nonfulled woolens from 3,468,000 yards to 380,000 yards in the same period (A. H. Cole, I, 279).

<sup>13</sup> *Eighth Census: Manufactures*, pp. lix–lx. Over the longer period 1849–69 the number of establishments making ready-made men's clothing increased from 4,278 to 9,705, while the value added was increasing from \$22,581,451 to \$67,595,752.

<sup>14</sup> *Ibid.*, p. lxiv.



state, due, in his opinion, to the demand by boatmen and "emigrants" for coarse clothing, to the presence in the cities of Hebrew merchants with capital, and to the use of the sewing machine;<sup>15</sup> in Chicago the wholesale and retail trade in ready-made clothing amounted to \$2,500,000 a year.<sup>16</sup>

Again, though, I think we need to be on guard against exaggerating the magnitude of the change. The rate of change was great, but the base small. It took the Civil War and the consequent demand for large quantities of men's clothing in standard sizes and patterns (uniforms) to complete the transformation, and not until about 1870 were the button-holing and cutting machines perfected. In women's clothing the shift to ready-made clothing came even later. As late as 1880 the manufacture of women's clothing was confined almost entirely to cloaks.<sup>17</sup> The expansion of the woolen industry was providing women with more flannel for petticoats, and the increasing manufacture of worsteds was partly made up of delaines, the dominant worsted for women's wear. But the changes in cloth manufacture, as well as those in ready-made clothing, had less effect upon women's dress: to a much greater extent than men they were still wearing linsey-woolseys, flannels, and even homespuns.

*The clothing of the well-to-do northerner.*—The wealthy man of 1860 was even more likely to have his clothing made for him by his tailor than is the wealthy man of today.<sup>18</sup> D. W. Mitchell commented that the clothing of the men was loose and easy, with long waists and turned-down shirt collars.<sup>19</sup> The dress coat was little used, most men preferring frock coats or sacks.<sup>20</sup> Arthur Charles Cole, in discussing the sartorial characteristics of the fifties remarks that these loose-fitting, black frock coats, to

<sup>15</sup> *Annual Report for the Year 1860* (Columbus: Richard Nevins, 1861), p. 226.

<sup>16</sup> Pierce, II, 109-10.

<sup>17</sup> *Census of Manufactures, 1914*, II, 187, quoted by A. H. Cole, I, 293.

<sup>18</sup> In the reports made to the 1860 Census more than 100,000 persons gave their occupation as "tailors and tailoresses." They were fairly evenly distributed over the country (*Population*, pp. 676-77).

<sup>19</sup> Pp. 70-71.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 91.

which the well-to-do and middle classes were so partial, were often seedy in appearance.<sup>21</sup> Rhys spoke of American men as wearing an ordinary broadcloth suit, which could scarcely be purchased for less than \$70; but Sam Cowell who, as a music-hall performer, had appearances to keep up, paid only \$56 for a two-trouser suit and an overcoat in 1861.<sup>22</sup>

While the wealthy continued to patronize their tailors, there must have been an increasing temptation to those of more moderate means to buy their clothing ready-made. I have found no comment on the quality of the output of the clothing factories. I suspect that the fit, at least, was rather less good than that of today's ready-made clothing. Still, the factory-made clothing was much cheaper than the tailor-made, and this was no small item. The increasing use of ready-made clothing cannot but have had as one result a certain measure of "standardization" in dress. Not since the Colonial period, it is true, had class distinctions been very much reflected in dress; but in the fifties it was becoming increasingly difficult to distinguish by his clothing the laborer from the person of means, the employee from his employer. Travelers from abroad were particularly struck by this. Baxter, who had his eye on the extravagance of Americans, reported, that, while the men of moderate income dressed in superfine broadcloth and white waistcoats, common workmen dressed in glossy black clothes even while at work. The Countess Pulszky wrote that "one gentlemen passes after the other, every one of them clad so exactly alike that they seem cast in one and the same mould." Gratton found it difficult to tell house servants from their masters.<sup>23</sup>

As for the women, it is easier to discover what the fashions of the fifties were than to find out what women were actually wearing. We may be sure, of course, that women's clothing showed more variety, more awareness of "style," than did men's cloth-

<sup>21</sup> *Irrepressible Conflict*, p. 168.

<sup>22</sup> Rhys, p. 127; Dishar, p. 253; for other clothing prices see Appen. F.

<sup>23</sup> Baxter, pp. 101-2; Pulszky, I, 60; Gratton, I, 266.

ing.<sup>24</sup> In the fashionable circles of the city there was a steady gain in the influence of French styles, as set forth in *Le Follet* and profusely copied in *Godey's Lady's Book* and other women's magazines. Parisian gowns and bonnets and American copies of them were conspicuously displayed by Broadway and Fifth Avenue strollers.<sup>25</sup> American women spent two or three times as much on dress as did Englishwomen,<sup>26</sup> and their expenditures were much criticized at home and wondered at abroad. Of dress in 1860 the historian McMaster wrote:

The extravagance of the age was a favorite theme with the moralists. A fashionable lady, they would say, spends on the milliner, the mantua maker, the lace dealer a sum that would have supported a household of the same rank in Washington's day. One dry-goods dealer advertises a lace scarf for fifteen hundred dollars; another a bridal dress for twelve hundred dollars. Bonnets are easily sold at two hundred dollars. Cashmeres cost three hundred dollars and up and may be seen by dozens, any day, on Broadway. One hundred dollars is quite a moderate price for a silk gown. In a word, extravagance in dress has reached a height that would have astounded our prudent grandmothers. A thousand dollars a year is not thought too much to expend on dress by women pretending to be "in society."<sup>27</sup>

<sup>24</sup> The women's clothing industry remained much smaller in scale than did the men's clothing industry. There were about 4,000 manufacturers of men's clothing (apart from manufacturers of shoes, hats, shirts, and other haberdashery) with annual outputs of \$500 and over; but there were only 96 making cloaks, mantillas, etc., 14 making corsets, and 78 making hoopskirts (*Eighth Census: Manufactures*, pp. lix-lx, lxxxv-lxxxviii).

On the other hand, 90,198 persons gave their occupations as "seamstresses" (60,254 in the sixteen states I have grouped as "The North," 28,068 in the South, and 1,876 in the Frontier), and 101,868 persons as "tailors and tailoresses" (88,383 in the North, 11,733 in the South, and 1,822 in the Frontier) (*Eighth Census: Population*, pp. 672-73, 676-77).

Dressmakers who went into the homes of their customers were paid only from 62½ cents to \$1.00 a day (Ware, pp. 49-50).

<sup>25</sup> A. C. Cole, pp. 164-65; cf. Sala: "Broadway is crowded with gay dresses and pretty faces. Oh! these charming wearers of fur mantles and Paris bonnets" quoted by Grace E. Thompson in Fischel and von Boehn, III, 20-21; see also McClellan, p. 285.

<sup>26</sup> A. C. Cole, p. 164. Mrs. Bishop reported seeing more beautiful "toilettes" on Broadway in one afternoon than in Hyde Park in a week. The ladies of New York, she thought, dressed beautifully, and in good taste; their costly silks and rich brocades swept the streets (Isabella Bishop, pp. 361-62).

<sup>27</sup> John Bach McMaster, *A History of the People of the United States, from the Revolution to the Civil War* (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1913), VIII, 290. The prices seem to be taken from Watson's *Annals*, II, 597-98. McMaster mentions as current the belief that one of the causes of the panic of 1857 was the extravagant costumes of the women, which consumed a hundred million yards of costly material (VIII, 302).

And *Harper's Weekly* reprinted from the *Boston Traveller's* New York correspondence:

The amount of dry goods sold during the festive season is a pretty good criterion of the state of the money market. It is safe to infer, therefore, that New York coffers are well furnished, for our ladies have been allowed more for dresses from the 10th ult. to the present date than at any corresponding period since 1851. For example, one firm in Broadway is said to have sold \$20,000 worth of fine silks, satins, and velvets, not to mention shawls, muslins, and plainer articles within the period mentioned. I have seen one dress purchased at this house, which, with its trimmings, cost \$455. It is of violet color moiré of the richest quality sprigged with purple. The trimming consists of eleven narrow flounces covered with juipure of myrtle green, and embellished with a broad band of black velvet just above the hem. There is a pocket on each side half concealed by a ceinture of black velvet, the ends of which hang down in graceful folds like drapery. The details may seem to contrast too much with the other, but the general effect is elegant and graceful. Another dress, purchased at the same store, is of groseille colored silk, which cost \$350. It is figured with small bouquets of flowers, and has nine narrow flounces, each edged with velvet. But the corsage is its most beautiful feature, ornamented, as it is, with a fichu berthe of tulle trimmed with blonde.<sup>28</sup>

The Countess Pulszky found a degree of uniformity in women's dress, as she had in men's, but it was a uniformity of extravagance:

No characteristic costumes mark here the different grades of society, which, in Eastern Europe, impress the foreigner at once with the varied occupations and habits of an old country. But here all have submitted to the rule of Paris fashion, despotically swaying over Western Europe and across the Atlantic; they all wear the uniform prescribed by English tailors and French milliners. . . . The ladies wear the same bonnets and the same silk dresses and furs, only varied in colour, but equal in art, equal in adornment. There is no individual turn of mind impressed on the outward appearance, and therefore such an assembly bears a manufactured, thoroughly unartistic stamp, in singular contrast to the poetical beauty of the ladies.

She wrote that American dress materials were gaudy and expensive and that French and English silks were the habitual apparel of American ladies.

We hardly met one lady in Broadway without light coloured rich silks, such as at Paris we are only wont to see at evening parties; and they wear

<sup>28</sup> *Harper's Weekly*, IV (January 28, 1860), 55.

plumed bonnets, with which they would look much better in elegant coaches along the alleys of a park than among the pedestrians of the dusty pavement of New York.

They wore thin shoes, but their furs were "ample."<sup>29</sup>

Mrs. Sam Cowell wrote in her journal in January, 1861, that on Broadway there was

scarcely a lady to be seen without rich-looking furs, which could never be bought for less than \$100 to \$500. Cloaks, capes, pelisses of expensive velvets, silk and satin dresses trailing the *spitten* streets. Gold cords as trimmings, not only for bonnets, but forming seams of basques, etc. Feathers waving gracefully, bracelets and chains flashing ostentatiously.<sup>30</sup>

William Baxter also noted the "excessive love of dress" and wrote that ladies incurred enormous bills to drapers for silks, satins, and India shawls. Captain Rhys's comment was similar: "Dress, I may remark, is in New York a most expensive luxury. . . . A mild Lady's bonnet is cheap at 20 dols."<sup>31</sup>

*The clothing of the working class in the North.*—One is likely to be misled by too much attention to fashions or by giving too much weight to the impressions of foreign visitors, who came into contact mostly with the upper classes and to whom the clothing of laboring men and employed women seemed (in contrast with the clothing of similar classes in Europe) only less expensive imitations of the costumes of the wealthy. "Improvements in the matter of dress since 1830 were evident, but for the workaday world shirt sleeves, heavy brogan boots and shoes, and rough wool hats, were, of course, the rule."<sup>32</sup> Mrs. Cowell, pointing out the contrasts of the great city, noted having seen on Broadway, in the evening gaslight, "wasted men in threadbare cloaks, women in cotton gowns, and fragments of shawls, and . . . children in rags with swollen faces, and naked feet."<sup>33</sup> The reports of the various philanthropic agencies and the writings of contemporary reformers give the impression of anything but luxuriousness in the attire of the lower classes.

<sup>29</sup> Pulszky, I, 60, 66.

<sup>30</sup> Disher, pp. 238-39. .

<sup>31</sup> Baxter, p. 96; Rhys, p. 127.

<sup>32</sup> Dodd, *Expansion and Conflict*, p. 208.

<sup>33</sup> Disher, pp. 238-39.

Probably most of the women's clothing and a good deal of the men's was made in the home. Throughout the country the prices of Merrimac prints were from 11 to 12½ cents a yard; delaines ranged in price from 15 to 25 cents, while satinets sold usually for around 75 cents a yard.<sup>34</sup> Average retail prices in Massachusetts for the period 1851-60 were 10½ cents a yard for calico, 19 for cambric and gingham, 26 for muslin, and 99 for silk. Similar average prices for men's suit materials were: for broadcloth, \$2.23; linsey-woolsey, 25 cents; and materials for work clothing, much cheaper—jeans, 26 cents; denim, 14 cents. Men who bought their clothing ready-made paid from \$1.76 to \$8.80 for coats in 1859 (\$4.14 was a "low medium," \$6.84 a "high medium"); \$1.47-\$4.02 for trousers (\$2.34 was "medium"), and \$1.36-\$3.75 for vests (\$1.96 "medium"). Overcoats, in 1857, sold for from \$5.64 to \$20.00, a medium price being \$12.50.<sup>35</sup>

If we can judge from what Thoreau had to say about it, the members of the working class in Massachusetts needed to spend but little to secure clothing adequate to their needs; if they spent more it was because they were thinking of appearances. He wrote, in the early fifties:

While one thick garment is, for most purposes, as good as three thin ones, and cheap clothing can be obtained at prices really to suit customers; while a thick coat can be bought for five dollars, which will last as many years, thick pantaloons for two dollars, cowhide boots for a dollar and a half a pair, a summer hat for a quarter of a dollar, and a winter cap for sixty-two and a half cents, or a better be made at home at a nominal cost, where is he so poor that, clad in such a suit, *of his own earning*, there will not be found wise men to do him reverence?<sup>36</sup>

*The clothing of the northern farmers.*—I have little positive knowledge about the clothing of the urban working class, and even less about that of the farmers. I think there is no doubt that the everyday costume of the typical farmer consisted of a

<sup>34</sup> *Tenth Census*, XX, 4-32.

<sup>35</sup> Massachusetts, Bureau of Labor and Industries, *Annual Report for the Year 1885*, *passim*, esp. pp. 353-442.

<sup>36</sup> *Walden*, p. 27.

pair of jeans, or perhaps denim, pantaloons, probably factory-made because they were so cheap, and a rough work shirt, possibly made by his wife or daughter. With these he probably wore a suit of flannel underwear, cotton or woolen hose, stout brogans, and a rather battered wool hat. When it was too cold for shirt sleeves he put on a woolen jacket, and he must have had some sort of overcoat for the coldest days. I don't think he can have had many changes of clothing—perhaps two or three shirts and as many pairs of socks, rarely an extra pair of pantaloons. In a day when cleanliness was not taken too seriously he didn't need to worry about what to wear when his shirt or drawers became soiled.

Whether this typical farmer had a Sunday suit and other "dress-up" clothing is sheer speculation. It must be remembered that most of these farmers lived in grinding poverty. I cannot believe that many farmers in that day did have anything better than work clothing. The few who did have a "good suit" must have made it last a good many years.

Farm women made their own dresses from piece goods, most of them cheap cottons, and under them wore flannel petticoats or, in warm weather, cotton petticoats or chemises. Their stockings were also cotton, and their shoes more conspicuous for durability than for comfort or elegance. Many did without shoes in the summer. Children, except for the very smallest, were dressed much like their parents.

*The clothing of the southern planters.*—The dress of the planters and their families depended upon their social position, their location, their means, and their tastes.

If the master was niggardly in the matter of dress for his slaves, he was also rather indifferent about his own clothes. It had long been a mark of distinction in a gentleman of Virginia to dress in shabby or last year's suits; and what was good form in the Old Dominion was good form in the cotton country. Nor were the women fastidious. Elegant silks and gay bonnets then, as always, delighted their hearts, but the tyranny of seasons and of fashions did not rule the plantations. In Washington, however, where Southerners were always on dress parade, at Saratoga, or at the Virginia springs, planters' wives followed the Parisian styles, wore costly jewels, and drove handsome equipages. There the absentee mistress of even a small number of slaves

was at her social best, and her dinners, her salons, her balls were "the rage." . . .

In Charleston, Mobile, and New Orleans men of business, lawyers who owned country estates, and merchants whose names were known in New York and Boston, were more careful to maintain the fashion and dressed more like the Prince of Wales than was the custom on the plantations. After all, the democracy of Jefferson was waning, and in these centers the women generally dressed, much as they do today, to display the riches of their husbands; they were living advertisements of the family standing. [From "The Cotton Kingdom," Volume 27, *The Chronicles of America*, copyright Yale University Press.]<sup>37</sup>

In the larger cities much attention was paid to dress. Weld noticed the popularity of scarlet shawls and mantles in Baltimore when he was there, and Olmsted wrote of Richmond:

What is most remarkable in the appearance of the people of the better class, is their invariably *high-dressed* condition; look down the opposite side of the table, even at breakfast, and you will probably see thirty men drinking coffee, all in full funeral dress, not an easy coat amongst them. It is the same in the street, and the same with ladies as with gentlemen; silk and satin, under umbrellas, rustle along the side-walk, or skip across it between carriages and the shops, as if they were going to a dinner-party, at eleven o'clock in the morning. The last is only New York repeated, to be sure, but the gentlemen carry it further than in New York, and seem never to indulge in undress.

Lillian Foster thought the ball dresses were more exquisitely beautiful at New Orleans than at any other place except Paris.<sup>38</sup>

In North Carolina, homespun, both cotton and woolen, which had been used in large quantities in the first half of the century, had by the forties been relegated to the poor whites and Negroes. Women's dress and that of the male dandies was sensitive to changes in style. The average planter dressed more conservatively. Usually he wore a white stock of silk, linen, or more often cotton, and his waistcoat for ordinary wear was of drab wool. His suit also was of dark wool, with a coat, which usually had a cutaway effect, of mildly contrasting material. Trousers

<sup>37</sup> Pp. 76-77. Catherine Cooper Hopley wrote that on plantations fifty miles north of Richmond much cotton and wool was spun at home, and sometimes even cloth manufactured. Shoes even for white children were homemade (I, 227).

<sup>38</sup> Weld, p. 337; Olmsted, *Seaboard Slave States*, p. 50; Foster, p. 165. J. Milton Mackie also referred to the expensiveness of women's clothing in New Orleans. In southern cities clothing was likely to be made by slaves and free Negroes. Charleston's census of 1848 reported 24 slaves and 196 free Negroesses as seamstresses, and only 125 white women (cited by Phillips, *American Negro Slavery*, p. 403).



were loose and high waisted, and to prevent bagging they had a strap which was worn under the shoe. In the country there was less change from year to year, but fashions were not altogether disregarded.<sup>39</sup>

Minnie Clare Boyd notes that in Alabama the list of advertised dress goods included rich brocades, fancy plaid silks, plain pink, blue, and American delaines, colored and black English and French merinos, ginghams, and prints, at every price. The millinery store at Tuskegee advertised millinery and fancy goods from the best New York and Philadelphia houses. The men's stores got their patterns from New York, in the finest materials and the most fashionable styles.<sup>40</sup>

In the Gulf states little attention was paid to fashion except in the cities. Olmsted, on a plantation in northern Mississippi, found the slaves spinning and weaving coarse cottons on primitive equipment and the mistress spinning in the living-room. All the everyday clothing, both for the white family and for its servants, was made on the plantation, and only a few "dress-up" clothes were bought.<sup>41</sup>

The clothing worn by the small planters varied all the way from that of the large planters to that of the "poor whites." James Roberts Gilmore, who as a northerner found more to criticize than to approve, wrote of the fairly well-to-do small planters near the boundary between the Carolinas that their clothing was more uncouth and ill-fashioned than that of the New England farmers. Of one of them:

He wore a broadcloth coat of the fashion of some years ago, but his waistcoat and nether garments of the common, reddish homespun, were loose and

<sup>39</sup> G. G. Johnson, *Ante-bellum North Carolina*, pp. 89-90.

<sup>40</sup> Boyd, pp. 110-11. She estimates that a student at the University of Alabama would have spent for clothing, 1860-61, the following: two coats, \$30.00; two pairs white pants, \$15.00; eight pairs summer pants, \$32.00; one winter jacket, \$5.00; two summer jackets, \$6.00; two vests, \$6.00; two caps, \$4.00; twenty-four collars, \$4.00; six pairs drawers, \$4.50; one dozen socks, \$3.50; eight pairs Berlin gloves, \$2.80; six pairs shoes, \$24.00; six handkerchiefs, \$2.00; one pair suspenders, \$0.75; and one necktie, \$0.50 (p. 152).

Such Southern newspapers as I have seen — e.g., the *Lexington Observer and Reporter*, the *Louisville Courier*, the *Tri-Weekly Maysville Eagle* — usually advertised fancy millinery.

<sup>41</sup> *Back Country*, p. 141.

ill-shaped, as if their owner did not waste thought on such trifles. His hat, as shockingly bad as Horace Greeley's, had the inevitable broad brim, and fell over his face like a calash awning over a shop window.

And of another, more prosperous than most of his neighbors: "He wore a slouched hat and a suit of the ordinary 'sheep's grey,' cut in the 'sack' fashion, and hanging loosely about him." Gilmore describes the clothing of the wife of a small planter of South Carolina:

She wore a neat calico dress, fitting closely to the neck, and an apron of spotless white muslin. A little lace cap perched cosily on the back of her head, hiding a portion of her wavy, dark hair, and on her feet—a miracle, reader, in one of her class—were stockings and shoes! <sup>42</sup>

Her small boy and girl, and four slave children, were alike bare-headed, dressed in thick trousers and loose linsey shirts.

The common people in rural Alabama wore chestnut-colored woolen jeans and snow-white homespun shirts and home-knit woolen suspenders; the women, homespun suits. <sup>43</sup>

*The clothing of the poor whites.*—The clothing of the "poor whites" was apparently infinitely varied, but it was meager, and all of it coarse and dirty. As might be expected, the few travelers who came into contact with them picked out some samples. Gilmore, for instance, told of a South Carolina turpentine producer:

His coat, which was much too short in the waist and much too long in the skirts, was of the common reddish gray linsey, and his nether garments, which stopped just below the knees, were of the same material. From these downwards, he wore only the covering that is said to have been the fashion in Paradise before Adam took to fig-leaves. His hat had a rim broader than a political platform, and his skin a color half way between tobacco-juice and a tallow candle.

And of a girl in this class, "a soiled, greasy, graying linsey-woolsey gown [was] apparently her only garment." <sup>44</sup> Phillips writes of the clothing worn in the mountain coves:

With a wool hat, a cotton or tow shirt, and jeans breaches upheld by a single "gallus," a man was fully clad, though he might use coat and shoes

<sup>42</sup> Gilmore, pp. 183-84, 235, 279-82.

<sup>43</sup> Boyd, p. 112.

<sup>44</sup> Gilmore, pp. 166, 70.

against winter's chill. The cotton shifts and poke bonnets of the women, and their shapeless linsey-woolsey gowns varied not with the fashions of Paris or Philadelphia.<sup>45</sup>

The decline in the domestic manufacture of textiles had been least marked in the South. Victor S. Clark, in his history of manufacturing, writes that in the southern highlands the factory had not yet intruded upon the older household economy. As recently as 1876 country people in Tennessee still made home-made clothing in considerable quantities. Until 1865, he reports someone as saying, one-tenth of the citizens of those regions wore family manufactures.<sup>46</sup> Repeated instances of domestic industry seem to indicate that this is far from being exaggerated. The use of homespun clothing in Virginia, the Carolinas, and Alabama, as reported in the books of Miss Hopley, Gilmore, and Miss Boyd, has already been mentioned. Emily P. Burke wrote that in the northern part of Georgia the people manufactured all their own clothing, except hats and sometimes shoes. They raised their own cotton, carded and spun it, and wove it by hand. Even the dyes were homemade. One woman showed her a roll of cloth which was entirely the product of her own labor, from the planting of the seed to the final processing of the cloth.<sup>47</sup> And Olmsted wrote that the fifty "cracker" members of a Georgia meeting-house congregation were most of them dressed in homespun, though "not so poor as they looked."<sup>48</sup>

*The clothing of the slaves.*—Although the clothing of the field hands varied somewhat with their own enterprise, with the benevolence of their masters, and with climate and working conditions, generalization is not so difficult as for other groups in the population.<sup>49</sup> Dodd writes:

[As for the children,] their clothing was like the annals of the poor, short and simple, merely a shirt which reached to the knees. Shoes and hats were

<sup>45</sup> *Life and Labor*, p. 342.

<sup>47</sup> Burke, pp. 23, 209.

<sup>46</sup> Clark, I, 439.

<sup>48</sup> *Seaboard Slave States*, p. 454.

<sup>49</sup> It seems wiser here, as in the case of the food and shelter furnished the slaves, to cite information easily available rather than to try to take account of the great differences from plantation to plantation. For reports of the planters themselves see De Bow, *Industrial Resources*, IV, 177 (others in this work are summarized below); *De Bow's Review*, XXIV (1858), 325; and Starnes, pp. 493 ff. These may be balanced against the

useless encumbrances for pickaninnies in winter as well as in summer. Older negroes received a new suit of clothes, two pairs of shoes, and a cheap hat each year, and at Christmas time a little liquor, some trinkets for the women, and a small sum of spending money. [From "The Cotton Kingdom," Volume 27, *The Chronicles of America*, copyright Yale University Press.]<sup>50</sup>

Gray, in his history of southern agriculture, generalizes by saying that the male slaves were furnished trousers of "osnaburgs" and two or three rough gingham shirts for summer and for winter a coat and trousers of mixed wool and cotton. They received one or two pairs of rough shoes each year.<sup>51</sup>

The advice given by the planters themselves, in De Bow's *Industrial Resources of the South and West*, is interesting, though probably more liberal than the actual practice of the planters as a group. One Mississippi planter recommended four full suits of clothing and two pairs of shoes a year. Women and girls should be given a calico dress and two handkerchiefs extra. Another correspondent suggested that not fewer than three suits of clothes should be given the men each year. Children used up at least four suits and would use more except for home mending. He suggested also that each hand be given, as a protection against dew, a long apron with sleeves, made of cotton osnaburgs coated with linseed oil. A "small farmer" pointed out that the clothing requirements necessarily varied with use and care. His own rule was to give for winter a linsey suit, one shirt of the best toweling, one hat, one pair of shoes, and one good blanket (of the sort costing from \$2.00 to \$2.50) every other

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reports of the slaves themselves, as those of Douglass, p. 101; and Washington, pp. 11-12.

Among biographies and memoirs, the following may be cited: Avirett, pp. 58-59; Mallard, p. 32; Smedes, pp. 34-38, 47; Robert McElroy, *Jefferson Davis* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1937), I, 39-40. For travelers' accounts see Olmsted, *Seaboard Slave States*, pp. 112, 432, 694, and *Back Country*, pp. 76-80; and "An Englishman in South Carolina," *Continental Monthly*, II (1862), 693.

And among recent historians: Ballagh, p. 103; Bassett, p. 87; Flanders, pp. 159-62; Johnson, *Ante-bellum North Carolina*, pp. 523-24, and *Sea Islands*, pp. 87-88; McDonald, p. 156; McDougale, *Journal of Negro History*, III, 72-73; Moody, pp. 79-81; Patterson, p. 66; and Phillips, *American Negro Slavery*, p. 266.

<sup>50</sup> P. 75.

<sup>51</sup> I, 565.

year. For summer he gave them two shirts, two pairs of pants, and one straw hat. Some needed more.<sup>52</sup>

It appears to have been the practice on many plantations to make most of the clothing for the slaves at home. Sometimes this included even the spinning and weaving of the cloth; sometimes cloth was purchased but was made into garments by the female slaves, frequently with the help and under the supervision of the women of the planter's family. On St. George Cocke's Virginia plantation as much as possible was made on the plantation; wool and cotton were grown, and women with young children were required to spin and weave.<sup>53</sup> On the North Carolina plantation of which Avirett wrote all was spun, woven, and made on the plantation, and even the dyes—from oak, poplar, dogwood, and cochineal—were homemade.<sup>54</sup> In Georgia some of the clothing material was made on the plantation, but large amounts of osnaburgs (a coarse linen of flax and tow) were purchased. Many planters had their own tannery and cobbler.<sup>55</sup> Mrs. Smedes wrote that on the Mississippi plantation on which she had been brought up the everyday clothing of all the Negroes—wool and cotton suits—was cut and made in the house. Woolen socks and stockings were knit in their cabins by the old women and in the "great house" by young girls. On rainy days the slave women were taught to sew. Even shoes were made on the plantation. The clothing for newly born infants was made by the mistress.<sup>56</sup> Louisiana sugar planters bought most of the clothing for their slaves ready-made, but shoes were made on the plantation.<sup>57</sup>

Information is lacking on the clothing supplied the house servants. Some few were dressed in livery, the others were prob-

<sup>52</sup> *Industrial Resources*, II, 331-35. The problem of protecting Negroes and their clothing against moisture attracted the attention of another writer, who suggested that waterproof "sacks" be made by coating a cotton-cloth overcoat, or sack, with a mixture of linseed oil and litharge (*ibid.*, IV, 512).

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 177-78.

<sup>54</sup> P. 58; cf. Johnson, *Ante-bellum North Carolina*, pp. 523-24. <sup>55</sup> Flanders, p. 159.

<sup>56</sup> Smedes, pp. 34-38, 45; cf. also Olmsted, *Back Country*, pp. 76-80; and Wendel H. Stephenson, p. 369.

<sup>57</sup> Moody, p. 80.

ably fairly well clothed, either in the discarded garments of the white family or in clothing purchased for them.

The clothing of the slaves in the cities and towns depended upon their occupation, upon their master's generosity, and upon their own initiative. Most of them were either house servants and clothed accordingly or were hired out by their owners in various occupations. Many of them had money of their own to spend. But the accounts which tell us of the dress of Negroes in southern cities probably give too bright a picture. These observers saw the Negroes at their best, on special occasions, and a good share of them were probably freed Negroes. To Olmsted, who mentions the Negroes he saw on the streets of Richmond one Sunday, the greater part of them seemed dressed in the cast-off clothes of whites. Many, who he thought had probably come in from near-by farms, wore clothing of coarse gray "Negro cloth," that appeared as if "made by contract" without regard to size. A few had a better suit of coarse blue cloth, evidently made especially for them, for "Sunday clothes." J. Milton Mackie found the Negroes in Charleston dressed in their Sunday best, and Nehemiah Adams, after spending a Sunday in Savannah in 1854, described the Negroes there, in their

broadcloth suits, well-fitting and nicely-ironed fine shirts, polished boots, gloves, umbrellas for sunshades, the best of hats, the young men with their blue coats and bright buttons, in the latest style, white Marseilles vest, white pantaloons, brooches in their shirt bosoms, gold chains, elegant sticks, and some old men leaning on their ivory and silver-headed staves, as respectable in their attire as any who that day went to the house of God.

Lillian Foster, in Augusta in 1853, was struck by the extravagant dress of the black population she saw going to church. The plainly dressed ones were in black-silk dresses, white-muslin shawls, and straw bonnets. The men were in broadcloth with bright buttons, fine hats and gloves, canes, and with usually a watch and breast pin. Emily Burke commented similarly on the slaves she saw in the cities and towns of Georgia—they generally wore good clothing, and many even dressed extravagantly, some of them to the point of wearing costly jewelry.<sup>58</sup>

<sup>58</sup> Olmsted, *Seaboard Slave States*, p. 28; Mackie, pp. 101-2; Adams, *A South-Side View of Slavery* (Boston: T. R. Marvin, 1854), pp. 29-30; Foster, p. 94; Burke, pp. 87-88.

*Clothing on the Frontier.*—If the absence of class distinctions in dress was an American characteristic, it was most evident in that most "American" of all regions, the Frontier. The farther west one went, the more similar became the clothing of the richest and the poorest, and by the time the Frontier was reached it was impossible to distinguish classes (if, indeed, there were any classes) by the clothes they wore. In rural Illinois \$20 for a suit was considered high, and Lincoln once handed down a court decision in which \$28 was declared excessive for a suit bought on credit by the son of a prosperous farmer.<sup>59</sup> Most of the men there in the fifties were wearing blue jeans, usually patched, and brogans.<sup>60</sup>

The clothing of this region and its manufacture are well described by Charles B. Johnson. Each home would have its loom, a crude, heavy contrivance, on which jeans and woolsey and sometimes less coarse fabrics were woven. There was also a spinning wheel, on which fibers were spun after they had been carded, the carding being done by an elderly female, if there was one in the family. Workingmen, and many others, wore jeans, the women linsey; the woolens were home-woven and homespun from wool grown on the backs of their own sheep. Socks were also of wool, winter and summer. Underclothing was seldom worn, and boys grew to manhood before having overcoats. The clothing was dyed with dyes prepared at home from indigo, madder, and various barks. For dress-up occasions men wore "store clothes," poorly fitting and poorly made. Workingmen, for everyday wear, wore long jeans "hunting shirts," and a wool outer garment called a "wammus," amply cut but with no skirt—more like a modern wool sweater than anything else—was also much worn. Most men wore heavy brogans, though some had boots made by the village shoemaker; rubber boots and overshoes were seldom seen. In stormy weather men wore overcoats and leggings of strong, thick cloth. Well-dressed men all wore thick, heavy woolen shawls, usually gray. Few but the

<sup>59</sup> Beveridge, II, 255.

<sup>60</sup> *Ibid.*, II, 198.

professional class wore watches. Women of forty-five and older all wore little white caps.<sup>61</sup>

It had not been long before 1860 that the pioneers in the Mississippi Valley had brought with them spinning wheels for spinning their own wool and cotton;<sup>62</sup> but it appears doubtful that there was much making of cloth as late as that year. Dick writes of the regions west of the Missouri River:

Ladies dressed in silks and tasty woollens, the skirts full and reaching to the ground. Shawls were worn summer and winter. Many men wore old army uniforms with bright brass buttons, but some had plain dark coats. A few even wore tall silk stove-pipe hats. These elegancies in dress were, however, confined to the few and more often both men and women dressed very plainly.<sup>63</sup>

The women, for the most part, made their own dresses, but from purchased dress goods. A Kansas pioneer later recalled the early sixties, when calico at 40 cents a yard had been almost the universal dress goods for women and small children. Those were hard times, when underclothing was frequently made from flour sacks.<sup>64</sup>

In Utah, to which transportation from the eastern factories was slow and expensive, more of the clothing had to be made at home. It is reported that in the typical home of the Utah pioneer of the fifties the family was likely to be engaged in all the various stages of making woolen cloth. The grandmother would be carding, the girls spinning, and the children helping. When ordinary materials could not be obtained, any and all kinds of cloth, even wagon covers, were made into dresses and trousers. Dyes, too, were homemade.<sup>65</sup> Richard Burton described the women of Salt Lake City as all wearing sunbonnets, with veils behind. They wore loose jackets and petticoats, usually of calico or some other inexpensive material. The wealthier affected silks, especially black silks.<sup>66</sup>

<sup>61</sup> *Illinois in the Fifties*, pp. 16-17, 23-26. The wearing of shawls by men was by no means peculiar to the Frontier (see "Shawls," *Harper's Weekly*, I [November 7, 1857], 709-10).

<sup>62</sup> Cf. Richman, p. 179.

<sup>63</sup> Dick, p. 70. <sup>65</sup> L. E. Young, pp. 192-93. Even combs were homemade.

<sup>64</sup> Valentine, p. 81. <sup>66</sup> Burton, p. 277.



On the mining frontier clothing was more likely to be picturesque than elaborate. Villard described the Colorado miners as wearing blue or red flannel shirts, woolen undershirts, cotton drawers, woolen or cotton socks, stout shoes, broad-brimmed soft felt hats, and pants and coats of thick wool, with overcoats in the winter.<sup>67</sup> What was being worn in Nevada may be judged from Simpson's notes of prices in the mining community of China Town: ordinary shoes \$3.00; pegged boots \$6.00-\$10.00; and hickory shirts \$1.25.<sup>68</sup> In Oregon the pioneers were so removed from supplies that when thread and cloth gave out buckskin and deer sinew were used.<sup>69</sup>

Little has been written of the clothing worn in California. The miners probably wore the rough clothing of the miners in other parts of the country; that of the ranchers can only be guessed at. The coast of California was more firmly connected to the East by transportation than were regions in the interior of the country, but the transportation was slow and relatively expensive. Clothing was not hard to obtain, but prices were probably high.<sup>70</sup>

The native populations of the Southwest paid little attention to dress. Olmsted spoke of the clothing worn by the Mexicans in San Antonio as loose and slight and slatternly. Frequently the women wore only a chemise and a calico petticoat.<sup>71</sup>

#### FURNISHINGS AND ACCESSORIES

*Boots and shoes.*—The application of mass-production methods had been carried farther in shoe manufacture than in any other part of the clothing industry. The development just prior to 1860 had been so rapid as to cause the author of the Census article on that industry to speak of a "silent revolution."<sup>72</sup>

<sup>67</sup> Villard, *Past and Present*, pp. 55-56.

<sup>68</sup> P. 90.

<sup>69</sup> Fuller, p. 279.

<sup>70</sup> Bandel gave the following prices for clothing in southern California (November, 1858): cap, \$2.00; two overshirts, \$2.00; two undershirts, \$3.00; one necktie, \$1.75; two handkerchiefs, \$1.50 (pp. 242-43).

<sup>71</sup> *Texas Journey*, p. 162.

<sup>72</sup> *Eighth Census: Manufactures*, p. lxxi.

More than one-twelfth of all the operatives in manufacturing were employed in the shoe industry—more than in any other single occupation outside agriculture. The Census reported 12,487 establishments, employing 123,029 workers, and producing boots and shoes valued at \$91,891,498.<sup>73</sup>

By 1860 there were few important makers who were not using steam- or water-power to drive their machinery; there were splitting machines, racing machines, pegging, sewing, and buffing machines, and machines for dieing out soles and heels.<sup>74</sup> The factory system itself came in around 1855, and by that year there were specialization of function, division of labor, and the widespread use of machinery. Towns were specializing in different kinds of footwear: New York and Philadelphia in fine boots and shoes, New England (which produced more than half the nation's total) in the mass production of cheap shoes. The Census spoke of the industry "daily assuming the characteristics of the factory system, being conducted in large establishments of several stories, each floor devoted to a separate part of the work, with the aid of steam power, and all the labor-saving contrivances of the trade."<sup>75</sup>

How comfortable and well-made these shoes were is less certain. Strippers and sole cutters, invented in the forties, gave regularity of shape and uniformity of size; and in the fifties the making of distinct shoes for right and left foot was coming to be, if not already, the rule.<sup>76</sup> Still, even in 1860 one or two styles of last were considered sufficient for a manufacturer to use on any particular line of goods.<sup>77</sup> Pegged boots and shoes made up the largest part of the output.<sup>78</sup> "No men's sewed boots were pro-

<sup>73</sup> *Ibid.*, p. lxvii.

<sup>74</sup> See Blanch Evans Hazard, *The Organization of the Boot and Shoe Industry in Massachusetts before 1875* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1921), pp. 78-112, 124 ff., William B. Rice, "The Boot and Shoe Trade," *One Hundred Years of American Commerce*, II, 567.

The McKay sewing machine, perhaps the most important single invention for the industry, was being adopted just about 1860. Again, the effect of the Civil War—creating a demand for mass-produced shoes—in speeding up industrial change should be mentioned.

<sup>75</sup> *Eighth Census: Manufactures*, pp. lxxi-lxxii.

<sup>76</sup> Hazard, p. 76.

<sup>77</sup> Rice, p. 572.

<sup>78</sup> *Eighth Census: Manufactures*, p. lxx.

duced in Massachusetts in 1860 except by custom workmen and by a half dozen manufacturers in Quincy and its vicinity, who made sewed calf boots for the Southern trade."<sup>79</sup>

While the working class purchased these factory-made shoes,<sup>80</sup> the well-to-do still ordered their own boots from custom bootmakers. Southerners bought cheaply made brogans by the hundreds for their slaves, while in the North farmers, hired help, and growing boys wore rough brogans or plow shoes. In the West it was impossible to have custom-made shoes, except such as the village shoemaker could turn out, and this gave added impetus to the specialized manufacture of ready-made shoes. While it is impossible to generalize as to how well shod the country was as a whole, there were enough shoes being made,<sup>81</sup> and they were being made cheaply enough, so that none but the poorest need to have gone barefoot.

It appeared in the early fifties that leather boots and shoes were to have a powerful rival in rubber footwear. For several years two of the largest rubber companies produced annually between 1,000,000 and 2,000,000 boots and shoes, but by 1860 the yearly output of the rubber-boot and shoe industry was only about 1,200,000 pairs.<sup>82</sup>

<sup>79</sup> *Shoe and Leather Reporter*, quoted in *Scientific American*, V (1861), 304.

<sup>80</sup> Retail prices for shoes in Massachusetts in 1859 were as low as 60 cents, as high as \$1.57 a pair, \$1.02 being considered a medium price. Boot prices ran from 70 cents to \$3.51, with \$1.35 a low medium and \$2.23 a high medium. Slippers sold at from 63 to 98 cents a pair (Massachusetts, Bureau of Labor and Industries, *Annual Report for the Year 1885*, pp. 343 and 346).

Merchants in twenty-two cities, fairly well scattered over the country, were able to report to the tenth Census the prices they had charged for men's heavy boots in 1860 or 1861. The prices ranged from \$1.50 to \$6.00, though perhaps three-quarters of the reports put the price at from \$3.00 to \$4.00 (U.S. Census Office, *Tenth Census of the United States, 1880: Report on the Average Retail Prices of the Necessities of Life*, XX [Washington: Government Printing Office, 1886], 109-11).

<sup>81</sup> The single state of Massachusetts produced 44,308,302 pairs of boots and shoes in 1860 (*One Hundred Years' Progress*, p. 324).

<sup>82</sup> See *Eighth Census: Manufactures*, pp. lxxix-lxxx; James L. Bishop, II, 413 and III, 307-9; and Charles L. Johnson, "American Rubber Manufactures," *One Hundred Years of American Commerce*, II, 501. The retail prices of rubber boots in Massachusetts in 1859 were from \$1.72 to \$3.50 a pair, with a medium price of \$2.25. Rubbers sold for \$0.70 (Massachusetts, Bureau of Labor and Industries, *Annual Report for the Year 1885*, p. 344).

*Hosiery.*—The first power knitting machine in the United States seems to have been put into use in 1832. By 1864, 126 patents had been granted for hosiery looms and knitting machines, 110 of them after 1850, and 36 after 1860. The power stocking loom and the rotary knitting machine, each invented in 1852, had each been improved two years later. By that year, 1854, a single New Hampshire firm had 7 power looms and 60 hand looms. Other improvements, including seamless hosiery, had been introduced by 1860. By the time the war commenced 4 per cent of the cotton yarn produced in the country was being used in the power knitting of hosiery and underwear.<sup>83</sup> Nearly 200 establishments making hosiery reported to the 1860 Census, having a product valued in excess of \$7,000,000.

*Hats and caps.*—By 1860 silk hats no longer needed a cane or willow framework, they were made by covering a body or foundation of felt, fur, silk, or muslin with plush or shag, having a long nap or pile of silk. The bodies of the best were being made chiefly of Russian hare's fur. Fur hats were made of the fur of hares, rabbits, muskrats, nutrias, and of wool, variously mixed and coated with fine beaver's fur—few were made wholly of beaver. The soft or felt hats were made of beaver, rabbit, or hare fur; the cheaper ones of wool, sometimes covered with goat or camel hair. The manufacturers included in the Census of 1860 reported a production for the year of 11,793,007 hats, of which 688,879 were silk; 2,449,672 were fur; 2,462,794 felt or soft; and 6,191,482 were woollen hats. They reported also 4,458,000 hat bodies and 1,646,600 caps. The making of palm-leaf hats was by this time well established. In 1845, 2,845,264 palm-leaf hats, valued at \$489,237, had been manufactured in Massachusetts alone; in 1860 the output for the whole country was valued at \$760,287.<sup>84</sup>

<sup>83</sup> J. L. Bishop, II, 489-90; V. S. Clark, I, 430, 559; see also Jonas B. Aiken, *Treatise on the Art of Knitting, with a History of the Knitting Loom* . . . ([New York?]: The Inventor, 1861).

<sup>84</sup> *Eighth Census: Manufactures*, pp. xciv, clvii, clxii; see also Edwin T. Freedley (ed.), *Leading Pursuits and Leading Men* (Philadelphia: Edward Young, 1856), p. 450. Retail hat prices in Massachusetts, as given by the report previously cited, ranged from 33 cents to \$2.79 in 1859, \$1.02 being designated as medium low and \$1.73 as medium

*Shirts and collars.*—I suspect, although I do not know positively, that a good many shirts were still being made in the home; in any case, I have no basis for making a quantitative estimate. As far as the commercial output is concerned, there were, in 1860, census returns from 219 establishments making shirts, collars, and men's furnishings, having an output for the year valued at more than \$7,000,000. Detachable collars and cuffs were probably first used around 1845, and dickies had also been in use for some years. (Paper collars, first made in the fifties, did not become popular until the sixties or later.)<sup>85</sup> The application of factory methods meant that prices were fairly low: one Philadelphia firm making high-quality shirts priced its output at from \$12.00 to \$60.00 a dozen; the bulk of its sales to country merchants were priced at from \$15.00 to \$27.00 a dozen, while fine linen shirts sold at from \$3.50 to \$5.00 each. Another Philadelphia company, supposedly making shirts of good quality, priced its output at from \$5.00 to \$40.00 a dozen.<sup>86</sup> Fore-runners of mail-order houses are to be seen in the firms advertising shirts by express, at prices usually about \$18.00 a dozen, occasionally somewhat higher.<sup>87</sup>

*Gloves.*—With the application of the sewing machine to glove-making, the output of the industry increased rapidly—from

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high. Straw hats had been sold the year before at from 18½ cents to \$1.12, with 50 cents as a medium price (p. 352). Men's black hats were advertised at \$2.00–\$4.00 in Charleston in 1854; and silk dress hats and black cassimere hats at \$4.00 in Louisville in 1859 (*Southern Business Directory and General Commercial Advertiser*, 1854, p. 353; *Louisville Courier*, July 1, 1859).

<sup>85</sup> *Eighth Census: Manufactures*, p. lxxv; Freedley, *Philadelphia* (1858 ed.), p. 224; *One Hundred Years of American Commerce*, II, 668.

For paper collars see J. L. Bishop, II, 508, 559–60, and III, 61–62; *Godey's Lady's Book*, LX (1860), 86; and S. Morton Peto, *Resources and Prospects of America* (New York: Alexander Strahan & Co., 1866), p. 132.

<sup>86</sup> Freedley, *Philadelphia* (1858 ed.), p. 224, and *Leading Pursuits*, p. 148.

The retail price of shirtings was usually from 10 to 12½ cents a yard (Massachusetts, Bureau of Labor and Industries, *Annual Report for the Year 1879*, p. 81; Massachusetts, Bureau of Labor and Industries, *Annual Report for the Year 1885*, p. 373; *Tenth Census*, XX, 4–32).

<sup>87</sup> See advertisements in *Harper's Weekly*, III (October 22, 1859), 688; *Illinois State Business Directory*, 1860 (Chicago: J. C. W. Bailey & Co., 1860), p. 455; and other contemporary publications.

\$700,000 in 1850 to well over \$1,000,000 in 1860, and to \$4,000,000 in 1870.<sup>88</sup> The manufacture of gloves was concentrated in a few localities: Fulton County, New York (in which was the town of Gloversville) in 1860 made nearly \$1,000,000 worth of gloves, mostly buckskin.<sup>89</sup> Even at the end of the century buckskin (deerskin) was the preferred material for gloves.<sup>90</sup>

*Shawls.*—Shawls, much used by men as well as by women in 1860, were made in a great variety of materials and patterns. In 1859 prices in Massachusetts ranged from 94 cents up to \$11.00 each, with \$4.83 designated as a medium price and \$2.42 a low medium.<sup>91</sup>

*Hoopskirts.*—While the hoopskirt era lasted, the manufacture of hoopskirts was an important branch of manufacturing. The Census reported 78 establishments making hoopskirts, with an annual product of nearly \$5,000,000. Several firms employed from 800 to 1,000 women and had daily outputs of skirts measured in the thousands.<sup>92</sup>

*Umbrellas.*—The manufacture of umbrellas had begun at the

<sup>88</sup> U.S. Census Office, *Twelfth Census, 1900: Census Reports*, Vol. IX: *Manufactures* (Part III: "Special Reports on Selected Industries") (Washington: Census Office, 1901-2), pp. 783, 795.

Gloves sold at from 13½ cents to \$1.12 a pair in Massachusetts in 1859, 29 cents being a low-medium and 78 cents a high-medium price; kid gloves sold at about 85 cents a pair. Mittens sold at from 29 cents to 91½ cents in 1858, 62 cents being a medium price (Massachusetts, Bureau of Labor and Industries, *Annual Report for the Year 1885*, pp. 350, 353).

<sup>89</sup> *One Hundred Years' Progress*, p. 327.

<sup>90</sup> *One Hundred Years of American Commerce*, II, 666.

<sup>91</sup> Massachusetts, Bureau of Labor and Industries, *Annual Report for the Year 1885*, p. 354. The wholesale price for standard shawls, 72 by 144 inches, weight 42 oz., made of XX Ohio fleece wool, remained at \$4.65 from 1857 through 1860 (*Aldrich Report*, II, 153).

The price of fur wraps was, of course, subject to a wide range of variations. A New York business directory of 1860 gives prices for a full set of furs—muff, cuffs, and cape—varying from \$25 for French cony or mixed squirrel up to as much as \$1,500 for Russian sable (Gobright and Pratt, *The Union Sketch-Book* [New York: Pudney & Russell, 1860], p. 60).

<sup>92</sup> *Eighth Census: Manufactures*, pp. lxxxv-lxxxvii. Gobright and Pratt describe one New York firm, which employed from 800 to 1,000 persons, as making from 2,500 to 4,000 skirts a day (pp. 54-57). *Harper's Weekly* for January 29, 1859 (III, 68) described a factory employing 800 women, with an output of 3,000 skirts a day; and the February 19, 1859 (III, 125) issue described one employing 1,000 women, turning out from 3,000 to 4,000 skirts daily.

turn of the century, but it was not until about 1865 that it became an important business.<sup>93</sup> In earlier years the covering had been of cotton, but by 1860 silk was being used, and some were covered with gingham or alpaca. The sticks were of rattan, some with handles of bone, horn, or ivory, and the framework was of whalebone or steel.<sup>94</sup> In 1857 one Philadelphia firm was producing about 700,000 umbrellas and parasols a year.<sup>95</sup> The output for the nation was valued at \$3,000,000 in 1860.<sup>96</sup>

The rubberizing of coats as a protection against rain had been developed some years before, but the mackintosh had not yet come into common use.<sup>97</sup>

*Watches and jewelry.*—The first watch to be produced by factory methods, using automatic machinery to make interchangeable parts, was made in 1850. These first appeared on the market in 1853, with an eighteen-size, "full-plate," thirty-six-hour watch at \$40. Sale was slow at first, but from that date American manufacturers began to control the market, where before many thousands of English and Swiss watches had been imported yearly.<sup>98</sup> A common gold watchcase could be ob-

<sup>93</sup> *One Hundred Years of American Commerce*, II, 652-53.

<sup>94</sup> Freedley, *Philadelphia* (1858 ed.), p. 391, and *Leading Pursuits*, pp. 473-74.

<sup>95</sup> Freedley, *Philadelphia* (1858 ed.), p. 391.

<sup>96</sup> *Eighth Census: Manufactures*, p. 742. Imports of umbrellas and parasols were limited to fancy goods. Lord and Taylor were advertising "extra rich French parasols" at \$3.00 each (*Home Journal*, June 23, 1860).

<sup>97</sup> Mackintosh, of Glasgow, dissolved caoutchouc in naphtha, applied the solution as a varnish to the surfaces of two pieces of cloth, laid them together, and pressed them between rollers. He was granted a patent in 1823 (*Eighth Census: Manufactures*, p. lxxv).

Goodyear himself was enthusiastic about the use of rubber for clothing, not only for protection against water, but for many other uses (see his *Gum-Elastic*, first published 1853-55, two vols. in one, *India-Rubber Journal's* facsimile reproduction [London: MacLaren & Sons, Ltd., 1937], esp. Vol. II, chaps. xxv and xxvi, in which he urges the use of rubber buttons, suspenders, stays, coats and capes, baptizing dresses, aprons, gloves, shoes, overshoes, firemen's hats, and so on).

<sup>98</sup> E. Howard, "American Watches and Clocks," *One Hundred Years of American Commerce*, II, 540; Milham, chap. xxi; *One Hundred Years' Progress*, p. 370; Harry C. Brearley, *Time Telling through the Ages* (New York: Doubleday, Page & Co., 1919), chap. xiii; "The American Watch Manufactory," *Leslie's*, VI (August 21, 1858), 186-87.

The dollar value of imports was still substantially higher than that of domestic production. In the year ending June 30, 1860, \$2,788,671 in watches and parts and \$101,221 in materials and unfinished parts were imported, re-exports being negligible (*Commerce*

tained for \$20 or less, more elaborate ones selling for up to \$125.<sup>99</sup>

Both men and women were fond of jewelry, and neither sex showed any undue modesty about wearing it. Men displayed theirs prominently. Their waistcoats were fastened with jeweled buttons, even diamonds, and jeweled studs and scarf pins were worn by the fashionable.<sup>100</sup> Women showed their taste for jewelry in earrings, brooches, necklaces, ropes of pearls, and bracelets and rings of enamel set with gold. Black ribbons were frequently worn about the wrist. In 1858 and 1859, when hair was arranged on top of the head in heavy braids, the coiffures were varied now and then with a tiara of velvet and pearls or jet or coral. Evening gloves were sometimes set with jewels.<sup>101</sup>

Such ostentation, of course, was only for the rich. While Tiffany's, at 550 Broadway, was employing two hundred workers in silverware and as many more in the manufacture of jewelry, New England was producing gilt and plated—and brass—jewelry on a factory basis. Attleboro, Pawtucket, and other cities were producing cheap jewelry of all sorts; and, while New York (with its gem market) led all states in the value of jewelry produced, Rhode Island employed the greatest number of work-

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and *Navigation Report*, 1860, pp. 76-77, 198-99). Reported domestic manufactures in 1860 were \$1,524,700 (*Eighth Census: Manufactures*, p. 742). More than 10,000 watch movements were manufactured at Waltham in 1858 (*Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, VII [March 12, 1859], 233).

<sup>99</sup> Freedley, *Philadelphia* (1858 ed.), p. 346. Gold watches were advertised at \$35-\$100, silver watches at \$12-\$25, in *The Boston Directory for the Year Commencing July 1, 1859* (Boston: Adams, Sampson, & Co., 1859), adv. sec., p. 76). An advertisement in the *Dial* (Cincinnati) for June, 1860, priced watches from \$10 (for Swiss, silver Swiss, and English levers) up to \$350 (for extra "fine" watches).

<sup>100</sup> McClellan, p. 414; Sage, p. 203.

<sup>101</sup> Lester, p. 199; McClellan, pp. 254-55; Sage, p. 203. Mrs. Bishop wrote that American ladies wore very costly jewelry; she had been shown in a store a \$25,000 diamond bracelet. But she was told that most of such ostentatious jewelry was worn in the West and South. This seems to have made quite an impression on her, for a few pages later she wrote that she saw little jewelry worn and that apparently its ostentation was more acceptable in the South and West (pp. 341, 363).

*Godey's* fashion editor offered to supply breastpins at \$4.00-\$12.00 each; earrings at \$4.50-\$10.00; bracelets at \$3.00-\$15.00; rings at \$1.50-\$3.00; necklaces at \$6.00-\$15.00; fob chains at \$6.00-\$12.00; hair studs at \$5.50-\$11.00 a set; and sleeve buttons at \$6.50-\$11.00 (*Godey's Lady's Book*, LX [1860], 87, and in other issues).



ers. The recent gold discoveries, however, had given a fillip to the manufacture of solid and plated jewelry and brought its wares within the range of a greater number of people.<sup>102</sup> How much the reports to the Census of Manufactures were worth is problematical. In 1860, 8 manufacturers reported making \$45,600 worth of "hair jewelry," and 463 manufacturers reported a total jewelry output of \$10,415,811.<sup>103</sup>

In 1842 the first factory for making pocket knives had been started in Connecticut.<sup>104</sup> Wholesale prices in 1860 were as low as \$1.40 a dozen for single-bladed, wood-handled knives, while pearl-handled penknives cost up to \$16.00 a dozen.<sup>105</sup> The "Barlow" knife was the familiar companion of men and boys all over the country.

#### CLEANING AND LAUNDERING

The commercial laundry was in 1860 hardly existent. To what extent people employed laundresses it is impossible to say; but we may be sure the wealthy were not doing their own washing when the poor were as numerous as they were. Nearly 40,000 women gave their occupations as laundresses in 1860,<sup>106</sup> and I think it hardly probable that this is anything like a complete listing. Washing machines of a fairly practical type—operated by turning a crank which churned the clothes about in a revolving barrel—were widely advertised, priced from \$10.00 up. But the great majority used a washboard and ironed with the same clumsy flatirons that had been in use for many years. Wooden clothespins of the sort still familiar were used in the fifties.

Considerable doubt attaches to the clothes-cleaning business—to what extent it had developed, what methods it used, what prices it charged.<sup>107</sup>

<sup>102</sup> James L. Bishop, III, 182-89; V. S. Clark, I, 527-28.

<sup>103</sup> *Eighth Census: Manufactures*, p. 737. During the year ending June 30, 1860, \$19,221 in set gems and \$929,969 in unset gems had been imported; there were no re-exports (*Commerce and Navigation Report, 1860*, pp. 216-17).

<sup>104</sup> *One Hundred Years of American Commerce*, I, xxv.

<sup>105</sup> *Aldrich Report*, II, 197-204.

<sup>106</sup> *Eighth Census: Population*, pp. 666-67. Many of these were Negroesses.

<sup>107</sup> Seven firms of clothes-cleaners were listed in the *Boston Almanac, 1860*, p. 129.

## BEAUTY AIDS IN 1860

*Soap and cosmetics.*—How far commercially manufactured soap had superseded the homemade variety by 1860 is open to question. It seems probable that, away from the towns and cities, at least, people continued to make their own soap—as, indeed, they were still doing on farms at a much later date. Says *Mrs. Putnam's Receipt Book*: "The fat from soup stock and all other fat that with proper care accumulates in a kitchen, may be used for making a soft soap with but very little trouble, and a great saving may be made thereby, as it is much better than the soap that you get in exchange for your house grease." The receipt called for 17 pounds of potash to 20 pounds of grease.<sup>108</sup> In Illinois "people made their own soap with lye and fat. The lye was made by leaching wood ashes and the fat came through the utilization of all kinds of meat scraps, some of which were sometimes repulsive in both appearance and smell. However, the strong lye with which the scraps were mixed corrected all this."<sup>109</sup> In Utah all the grease from cooking and butchering was carefully kept, and in the spring the grease and lye were boiled together in a great pot out of doors. It took many bushels of ashes and many pounds of grease, but usually only a day's time, to make a barrel of soap.<sup>110</sup> A contemporary book on domestic science gave instructions for making yellow hard soap (soda with oil or fat and resin), Castile (olive oil, saponified with soda, and colored), Windsor (tallow *plus* a small amount of olive oil and soda), cocoanut-oil soap, toilet soap (lard, almond oil, palm oil, olive oil, or suet, combined with soda or potash), and a variety of colored and perfumed soaps, transparent soaps, and other fancy varieties.<sup>111</sup>

Up to the middle of the century the commercial manufacture of soap had been associated with the packing industry,<sup>112</sup> and

<sup>108</sup> Pp. 193-94.

<sup>109</sup> Charles B. Johnson, p. 22.

<sup>110</sup> L. E. Young, p. 193.

<sup>111</sup> Youmans, p. 427. In many periodicals there were advertisements for a "saponifier," or concentrated lye for soapmaking.

<sup>112</sup> V. S. Clark, II, 35.

the combination of soap and candlemaking in the same firms continued. But Chevreul's discoveries in 1841 "demonstrated the true principles of saponification," and by 1850 the soap industry had grown to "great proportions." The manufacture of fancy soaps in the United States had begun; shaving soaps had been greatly improved, and other specialties either improved or made for the first time.<sup>113</sup> By 1860 there were more than 600 firms large enough to be included in the Census returns, with a combined output (of soap and candles) valued at \$18,500,000.<sup>114</sup> Retail prices were so varied as to make any sort of average worthless.<sup>115</sup>

Satisfactory shaving soap was being made by 1860, and the fastidious man could also have his after-shaving lotion. There were numerous manufacturers of shaving brushes and shaving strops, but apparently none of razors, all being imported. If people did not take care of their teeth, it was not from lack of dentifrices or toothbrushes or from lack of advertising. Most of the tooth powders and pastes had a charcoal base, but the more expensive ones were elaborately compounded out of such ingredients as pumice, cuttlefish bone, red coral, burnt hartshorn, burnt bone, shellac, prepared chalk, and the like. There were also mouth washes.<sup>116</sup>

<sup>113</sup> Samuel Colgate, "American Soap Factories," *One Hundred Years of American Commerce*, II, 422-28; see also Campbell Morfit, *Perfumery: Its Manufacture and Use* (Philadelphia: Henry Carey Baird, 1853), chaps. I-III, which describes the processes used in making soap. The best toilet soaps appear at that date to have had as a base a mixture of lard, palm oil, and spermaceti. Hard soap was composed of two parts of lard to one of soda lye at 36°. Floating soap was also being made. A wide variety of soaps—toilet soap, dental soap, mechanics' soap, household soap, shaving soap, and others—were advertised in the periodicals of the time.

<sup>114</sup> *Eighth Census: Manufactures*, p. 741. There were also 33 establishments making perfumery and fancy soap, with an output of more than \$1,000,000 (p. 739).

<sup>115</sup> Soap was usually purchased by the pound, which probably indicates that bar soap was rarely used outside the larger cities. Common soap sold in Massachusetts for about 11 cents a pound. The 25 retail stores reporting soap prices for the years 1859, 1860, or 1861 to the *Tenth Census* charged from 4 to 12 cents a pound, with no clustering about any particular price (Massachusetts, Bureau of Labor and Industries, *Annual Report for the Year 1885*, pp. 419, 452; *Tenth Census*, XX, 23-43).

<sup>116</sup> Colgate; Arnold J. Cooley, *Hand-Book of Perfumes, Cosmetics and Other Toilet Articles* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott & Co., 1873), *passim*; Morfit, chap. xxxvi. Advertisements for such dentifrices as "Balm of a Thousand Flowers" were to be found in all sorts of newspapers and magazines.

Sala somehow got the impression—I think erroneous—that American women used a great deal of prepared chalk, though rarely using rouge.<sup>117</sup> Powdered starch and farina seem to have been far and away the most popular face powders. Finely powdered light carbonate of magnesia was also used, as were finely powdered talc and scraped French chalk. A decade later, and probably it was as true in 1860, ladies of the *haut ton* were said to prefer metallic compounds of greater whiteness and brilliance: “pearl-powder” (subchloride of bismuth), “pearl-white” (trinitrate of bismuth), or even “flake-white” (carbonate of lead) and “white precipitate” (ammoniochloride of mercury), the last two highly poisonous.<sup>118</sup> There were also lotions, lip salves, hair oils and pomades, hair dyes, depilatories, and rouges in great variety.<sup>119</sup>

*Barbers and hairdressers.*—There were plenty of barbers in 1860.<sup>120</sup> Many of them were Negroes. In Virginia barbers were the most numerous and most useful class of freed Negroes. Many towns and cities—Lynchburg and Richmond, for instance—were at times almost wholly dependent on free colored barbers.<sup>121</sup> In Charleston in 1848 there were 4 slave barbers and 14 freed Negroes.<sup>122</sup> Philadelphia had 248 Negro barbers in 1856,<sup>123</sup> and there were 269 Negro barbers in Massachusetts in 1860.<sup>124</sup>

<sup>117</sup> II, 420.

<sup>118</sup> Cooley, pp. 428-29.

<sup>119</sup> Morfit, *passim*; Cooley, *passim*. Directions for making many of these at home are given in *Inquire within for Anything You Want To Know, or Over Three Thousand Seven Hundred Facts Worth Knowing* (New York: Dick & Fitzgerald, 1858). Widely advertised was Boyles' "Celebrated Hyperion Fluid" for the hair and mustaches.

<sup>120</sup> The Census listed 11,140 barbers, of whom 8,619 were in the North, 1,653 in the South, and 868 on the Frontier (*Eighth Census: Population*, pp. 656-57).

<sup>121</sup> John Henderson Russell, *The Free Negro in Virginia, 1619-1865* ("Studies in Historical and Political Science," Ser. XXXI, No. 3 [Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1913]), p. 151.

<sup>122</sup> *Census of Charleston in 1848*, quoted in Phillips, *American Negro Slavery*, p. 403. (There were also 6 white women listed as barbers.)

<sup>123</sup> W. E. Burghardt Du Bois, *The Philadelphia Negro* ("Publications of the University of Pennsylvania, Series in Political Economy and Public Law," Vol. XIV [Philadelphia, 1899]), pp. 143-44.

<sup>124</sup> *Abstract of the Census of Massachusetts, 1860*, pp. 356-57. (The abstract also notes, as a curiosity, the existence of one "tonsorial artist"—not a Negro, incidentally.)

Barbers followed the westward movement of the population. Leavenworth, Kansas, which in September, 1854, had a population of 99 men and 1 woman, had to wait another five months for its first barber-shop,<sup>125</sup> but of all the states and territories only Dakota failed to report any barbers to the 1860 Census. In the more settled parts of the country there were revolving and reclining barber-chairs,<sup>126</sup> and for 25 cents<sup>127</sup> one was entitled to a certain amount of luxury. Henry Murray found the American barber-shop an interesting place:

Scarcely less important than the bar [in a metropolitan hotel] is the barber's shop. Nothing struck me more forcibly than an American under the razor and brush: in any and every other circumstance of life full of activity and energy, under the razor or brush he is the picture of indolence and helplessness. Indifferent usually to luxury, he here exhausts his ingenuity to obtain it; shrinking usually from the touch of a nigger as from the venomous tooth of a serpent, he here is seen resigning his nose to the digital custody of that sable operator, and placing his throat at his mercy, or revelling in titillary ecstasy from his manipulations with the hog's bristles;—all this he enjoys in a semi-recumbent position, obtained from an easy chair and a high stool, wherein he lies with a steadiness which courts prolongation—life-like, yet immovable—suggesting the idea of an Egyptian corpse newly embalmed. . . . The barber's shop at the St. Nicholas is the most luxurious in New York, and I believe every room has its own brush, glass, &c., similarly numbered in the shop.<sup>128</sup>

Sala wrote that not one in five hundred New York belles dressed her own hair.<sup>129</sup> I suppose if they didn't do it themselves, their personal maids must have done it for them; but whether there was in 1860 anything corresponding to the modern beauty-shop I am unable to say. If they existed at all, they must have been very rare, for they have escaped mention in books of travel and descriptions of city life, as well as statistical enumeration.

<sup>125</sup> Dick, p. 63.

<sup>126</sup> *Hunt's Merchants' Magazine*, XXXVI (1857), 766, quotes from the *Detroit Advertiser* a description of a railroad sleeping car in which some of the seats had revolving and reclining backs "similar to barbers' chairs."

<sup>127</sup> Batcheler, p. 98.

<sup>128</sup> P. 12.

<sup>129</sup> II, 422.

## CHAPTER VIII

### MEDICAL CARE AND PUBLIC HEALTH

#### MEDICAL CARE

*Characteristics of the period.*—The progress yet to be made in medical care and public health may be judged by recent estimates of the expectation of life at birth in Massachusetts (see Table 5). Massachusetts was in the forefront of medical advance, yet even there the real achievements in lengthening human life have come since the Civil War.

TABLE 5\*  
EXPECTATION OF LIFE AT BIRTH, MASSACHUSETTS, 1789-1929

	1789	1855	1929
Expectation of life: males (years) . . . . .	34.5	38.7	58.1
Expectation of life: females (years) . . . . .	36.5	40.9	61.4

\* Source: Warren S. Thompson and P. K. Whelpton, *Population Trends in the United States* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1933), p. 240. Preliminary reports from the Sixteenth Census indicate that by 1940 the expectation of life at birth had been lengthened to 60.6 years for men and to 64.5 for white women.

Care needs to be exercised in interpreting these figures. Practically all the increase is attributable to the reduction in infant mortality rather than to an actual lengthening of adult life. (In 1879 the expectation of life at 60 was 14.80 for males, 16.10 for females; in 1929 it was only 14.01 for males, 15.35 for females.) Moreover, much if not most of the improvement is due to the rise in the general standard of living.

The high death rates and low life-expectancy of the fifties are hardly surprising when one remembers that even in the countries where the public health movement had had its origin there had been time for but little progress. In the United States neglect of the ordinary sanitary precautions was not limited to frontier regions. Everywhere "mosquitoes, flies, and other germ-harboring pests were regarded with equanimity, screens and disinfectants being used only in the best of hospitals."<sup>1</sup> "Carelessness and uncleanly conditions in the more thickly settled towns and cities bred diseases which quickly assumed an epi-

<sup>1</sup> Dodd, *Expansion and Conflict*, p. 208.

demic character.”<sup>2</sup> These diseases “invaded wholesome sections of the city, the luxurious homes of the affluent, the palace as well as the hovel. Sleeping apartments with luxurious appointments, with hot and cold running water were inviting places” for the invasion of disease.<sup>3</sup> Nor was it only country towns that permitted animals to wander through the streets as scavengers, adding the menace of hydrophobia while contributing to the uncleanliness of the streets.

Typical of the metropolitan cities of the East was New York, which

gradually became the natural home of every variety of contagious disease, and the favorite resort of foreign pestilences. Smallpox, scarlet fever, measles, diphtheria, were domestic pestilences with which the people were so familiar that they regarded them as necessary features of childhood. Malarial fevers, caused by the mosquitoes bred in the marshes, which were perfect culture-beds, were regularly announced in the autumnal months as having appeared with their “usual severity.” The “White Plague,” or consumption, was the common inheritance of the poor and rich alike. With the immigrant, came typhus and typhoid fevers, which resistless swept through the tenement houses, decimating the poverty-stricken tenants. At intervals, the great oriental plague, Asiatic cholera, swooped down upon the city with fatal energy and gathered its enormous harvest of dead. Even “Yellow Fever,” the great pestilence of the tropics, made occasional incursions and found a most congenial field for its operations.<sup>4</sup>

The South, besides having its quota of the diseases everywhere prevalent, suffered more than did other sections from dysentery and diarrhea, from malaria, and from hookworm; near the Gulf yellow fever was a constant menace. Planters usually safeguarded the health of their slaves so far as possible; but the new slaves brought into the Deep South sometimes brought disease with them, and in some particularly unhealthful localities planters lived in constant fear of the approach of cholera and other diseases. Ague and fever were the common property of all the Frontier, and the restricted diet in the newly settled areas of the Far West led to nutritional diseases. Diseases which

<sup>2</sup> A. C. Cole, p. 179.

<sup>3</sup> David Allyn Gorton, *The History of Medicine* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1910), I, 207-8.

<sup>4</sup> Stephen Smith, pp. 19-20.

might otherwise have been trivial were made serious by the lack of adequate medical facilities—deaths in childbirth, for instance, were relatively two and a half times as common in the Far West as in the country as a whole.

*Medical knowledge in 1860.*—Not until the middle of the nineteenth century was the doctrine of spontaneous generation of life completely and conclusively refuted, and even after 1860 distinguished physicians believed in it. The first disease microbe was identified in 1863; and from that time on disease after disease was traced to its cause and a preventive or cure found. But in the fifties malaria was almost universally believed to be of miasmatic origin, and other communicable diseases were similarly misunderstood or were complete mysteries. It was possible, it is true, to vaccinate against smallpox, but Pasteur had not yet devised his preventive vaccination technique.<sup>5</sup>

Although it is difficult to be precise, there do appear to have been advances in diagnosis and treatment and also advances in operative techniques—some of them the product of American surgeons. Chief of these was the use of general anesthetics following the pioneer work of Wells and Morton in 1844. Lister's antiseptic surgery, of course, did not come until 1865 and the use of radium and the X-ray until much later.

*Medical practice in 1860.*—It was hardly to be expected that what advances there had been in medical science, made so recently and so far away, should have had much effect in improving medical practice in a country of inadequately trained physicians and of scattered population with a penchant for family remedies and for fads of all sorts. Quacks and frauds preyed upon the ignorant masses, selling them patent medicines guaranteed to cure all diseases and devising all sorts of mechanical, magnetic, and electrical gadgets supposedly useful in the treatment of diseases. Phrenologists and spiritualists claimed spe-

<sup>5</sup> For the status of medical knowledge in 1860 see any standard history of medicine. Fielding H. Garrison, *An Introduction to the History of Medicine* (3d ed.; Philadelphia: W. B. Saunders Co., 1922), and Ronald C. Macfie, *The Romance of Medicine* [London: Cassell & Co., Ltd., 1907] are particularly useful. Arturo Castiglioni, *A History of Medicine*, trans. and ed. E. S. Krumbhaar (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1941) is a broader treatment but less detailed; chap. xix deals with the first half of the nineteenth century.



cial abilities, others claimed to heal through manipulating the muscles, and still others promoted dietary fads.<sup>6</sup>

It was during the fifties that the "water-cure," or hydropathy, acquired a certain prestige and a host of practitioners. Homeopathy (and the same is true of hydropathy) appealed to many well-trained physicians who had come to distrust the heroic medication then in vogue. Homeopathic colleges, hospitals, and societies sprang up in the big cities; and homeopathic physicians were well received all over the country—many villages had two doctors, one "allopathic" and one "homeopathic." Meanwhile, the traditional practices of "Indian medicine" and botanic medicine had their followings, and "eclectic" medicine, which claimed to combine the best features of the competing groups, had its share of practice.

*The physicians.*—The legal requirements for practice were not very exacting: usually the law required three years of study with some practicing physician and two courses of lectures at a medical college. The time spent in study under the preceptor was often a mere formality, while the medical schools were themselves very lax, and frequently suffered from dissension among the faculty.<sup>7</sup> In most states the applicant did not even need a degree, "but where diplomas of the highest grade can be procured at so little trouble, and at a cost not exceeding forty or fifty pounds, nearly all physicians can legally sign themselves 'M.D.' The dealer in quack medicines gets a diploma."<sup>8</sup> A little study abroad, where standards were not much higher, brought additional prestige.

There were but faint indications of a trend toward specialization. Surgery was still largely in the hands of the general

<sup>6</sup> Gorton (I, 179 ff.) is a readable account of the practice of medicine in the fifties.

<sup>7</sup> For medical training, Gorton (I, 201-2) and Francis R. Packard, *History of Medicine in the United States* (New York: Paul B. Hoeber, Inc., 1931), esp. I, chap. vi, and II, chaps. xi and xii), are good. The comments of Thomas Low Nichols, himself a physician and an exponent of the water-cure, are interesting (I, 363 ff.).

Sectional rivalries and the "booster" spirit accounted for the founding of new medical schools all over the country, contributing to the general demoralization.

<sup>8</sup> Nichols, I, 364.

practitioner, and this same practitioner not infrequently pulled teeth as well. Beginnings had been made in specialization in such fields as obstetrics and gynecology, laryngology, and otology, in ophthalmology, and in pediatrics; but dentistry had gone furthest in developing into a distinct profession—perhaps, as Cole suggests, because of the “ravages of disease in the wake of a faulty diet”;<sup>9</sup> perhaps the opportunities dentistry offered to American inventiveness had something to do with it. There were 5,600 dentists in the country, or about 18 for every 100,000 persons. Towns of any size had dentists permanently located, while other dentists served several communities, making a circuit in their buggies once or twice a year. Notable advances had been made in the technique and equipment of dental surgery,<sup>10</sup> though general practice remained crude in its methods. The most common method for installing a full set of false teeth was to set separate porcelain teeth upon a gold plate; other methods involved the setting upon the gold plate of porcelain teeth carved with a continuous gum or the setting of single teeth on a platina plate and packing them with a mineral compound to form an artificial gum.<sup>11</sup> During the late fifties numerous dentists were advertising complete sets of false teeth at from \$8.00 to \$70.00, with single teeth at \$1.00 and up. Cleaning came as low as 50 cents, extraction 25 cents, and filling (with gold, gutta-percha, or amalgam) at from 50 cents to \$1.00.

The Census reported more than 8,000 nurses in the country in 1860,<sup>12</sup> or about 26 for every 100,000 persons; four-fifths of them were in the North. The term “nurse” as then used, however, meant something quite different from what it does today:

There were no trained nurses except the male internes at the hospital who had had no systematic training. There had never been training schools for nurses, male or female. Young men with hospital experience were sent out as

<sup>9</sup> A. C. Cole, p. 187.

<sup>10</sup> See Charles R. E. Koch (ed.), *History of Dental Surgery* (Chicago: National Art Pub. Co., 1909), I, 220 ff.; and Arthur Ward Lufkin, *A History of Dentistry* (Philadelphia: Lea & Febiger, 1938), pp. 209 ff.

<sup>11</sup> *Scientific American*, XII (June 6, 1857), 310.

<sup>12</sup> *Eighth Census: Population*, pp. 670-71.

occasion required. But the idea of a woman nursing a man, unless he were her husband, had never occurred to anyone. That was an evolution not yet reached.<sup>13</sup>

It was not until 1873 that Bellevue Hospital in New York, Massachusetts General Hospital in Boston, and the Connecticut Training School in New Haven opened the first hospital training schools for nurses in this country. As late as 1890 there were fewer than 500 graduate nurses in the United States.<sup>14</sup>

*Sectional differences in medical care.*—The Census returns indicate that in 1860 there were fewer physicians in the North, relative to the population, than in the rest of the country, although the North had its share of surgeons and in eye specialists was definitely superior—the latter probably indicative of a greater tendency toward specialization in the more urban parts of the country (see Table 6). This Census data is open to serious qualification: there is doubt as to the completeness of the returns, doubt as to the definitions of the occupations,<sup>15</sup> and, above all, doubt as to the ability and training of the practitioners. Returns for the number of midwives are particularly open to question, but they do seem to show that for the most part general practitioners were called in for deliveries in the North. Midwives were rare outside Missouri (a state questionably northern) and Pennsylvania; there were none in New England or New York<sup>16</sup> (and this last group had the lowest mortality rate for childbirth cases—200 deaths in 10,000 of all deaths among women).

The physicians of the North were probably the best trained of any in the country, but even there medical fees were moderate. In Boston, during the fifties, the fee for a visit was \$1.00, and frequently only 50 cents.<sup>17</sup> A distinguished New York surgeon

<sup>13</sup> Gorton, I, 213.

<sup>14</sup> Finley, p. 105.

<sup>15</sup> In Table 6 I have combined the totals for "physicians" and "surgeons"—I am inclined to doubt whether, in most instances, the distinction was based upon anything more fundamental than the individuals' preference in terminology. Similarly, I have combined the Census categories "oculists" and "opticians."

<sup>16</sup> *Eighth Census: Population*, pp. 668-69.

<sup>17</sup> [James Bourne Ayer], *James Ayer* (Boston: Privately printed, 1892), p. 24.

like Valentine Mott could obtain large fees: Mott twice obtained \$1,000 for a single operation and at death left an estate of nearly \$1,000,000.<sup>18</sup>

Measured in terms of number of physicians to the hundred thousand of population, the South was ahead of the North; the small number of specialists is probably the result of the predominantly rural character of the South. The 182 midwives recorded for the South indicate a much greater dependence upon that type of "specialist" than in the North—but, as in the North, we find certain states (North Carolina, which was in a

TABLE 6\*  
NUMBER OF DOCTORS IN 1860

SECTION	PHYSICIANS AND SURGEONS		OCULISTS AND OPTICIANS	
	Number	No. per 100,000	Number	No. per 100,000
The North.....	32,434	168	349	1.80
The South.....	18,950	190	26	0.25
The Frontier.....	3,671	240	18	1.17
United States.....	55,055	175	393	1.25

\* Source: *Eighth Census: Population*, pp. 670-71, 676-77.

sort of economic backwater, and the two western states of Mississippi and Kentucky) accounting for most of the midwives. From the great differences between the states one suspects that the differences are mostly to be explained as differences in the method of enumeration.

Frontier conditions characterized more of the South than of the Northeast,<sup>19</sup> and such conditions are always conducive to malarial fevers, since there is little opportunity to drain the

<sup>18</sup> S. D. Gross, *Memoir of Valentine Mott, M.D., LL.D.* (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1868), p. 88.

<sup>19</sup> What I have to say here is largely taken from Richard H. Shryock, "Medical Practice in the Old South," *South Atlantic Quarterly*, XXIX (1930), 160-78. See also the relevant pages in F. Garvin Davenport, *Cultural Life in Nashville on the Eve of the Civil War* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1941).

land or to determine the most healthful locations prior to settlement. The longer summers and more steady heat encouraged the insect life associated with malaria, yellow fever, dengue, and typhoid; they made food preservation more difficult; they complicated sanitary problems; and they were responsible for such a folk habit as going barefoot, which resulted in hookworm infection. The routine diet (partly due to slavery) caused common parasitic infections, as well as diseases more directly linked with malnutrition. Along the lower Mississippi and the Gulf the dirt-eating disease, which was probably partly hookworm and perhaps beriberi, was common. The mortality rate of New Orleans was estimated at three times that of contemporary London, New York, and Philadelphia. On the other hand, the upper Piedmont and such cities as Charleston, were relatively healthful. Yellow fever was largely restricted to towns and to whites; cholera "drew no color line" and attacked both towns and plantations. The South needed its own medical schools, because of the peculiarities in southern conditions, and schools in southern cities began as early as the twenties; journals were also established, of a quality comparable to those of the North. But even in the years just before the War southern students in the northern medical schools were one of the largest southern groups there resident. There was considerable friction; and, especially during the fifties, many small schools were founded, with low standards. At the same time there were other demoralizing influences—the opening-up of the Frontier (from about 1815 on), the distrust of orthodox physicians, the demand for doctors of any kind. By 1850 everyone was allowed to practice.

The availability of medical facilities in the South differed from their availability in the North chiefly because of two factors—the presence of a large slave population and the rural character of the southern states, with few cities and with the bulk of the population widely scattered. In spite of the comparatively high ratio of physicians to population, one is inclined to suspect, in the absence of specific information, that away from the older and more settled regions the people in the South were likely to be farther away from the nearest physician and

more dependent upon their own doctoring than was true in the North. "Medical therapy consisted chiefly of pukes and purges, blood letting, and blistering."<sup>20</sup> Surgery was still in the hands of the general practitioner, although after 1860 more attention was paid to surgery as a special branch. Operations usually took place in the doctor's office or in the patient's home. The general practitioner also pulled teeth.

The agreed charges of the Cahaba (Alabama) Medical Association in 1854 were: prescription and medicine, \$2.00; mileage in country, 50 cents a mile (night and inclement weather, double); delivery, \$25.00 (instrumental, \$40.00); major operation, \$30.00; minor operation, \$5.00; tooth extraction, \$1.00; consultation, \$10.00.<sup>21</sup> The average annual income for country practitioners in Alabama was said to have been \$1,000.00; for small-town practitioners \$2,000.00.<sup>22</sup> Throughout the South the charity practice was large.

A problem peculiar to the South was that of keeping the slave in good health. The Negro, as is well known, is peculiarly sensitive to diseases of a certain type—tuberculosis, for instance. In addition, his going barefoot made him particularly liable to hookworm, his restricted diet to other diseases, his working and living conditions to malaria, and perhaps his habits to venereal diseases. The slave was a valuable piece of property and, with all these dangers to be guarded against, it is hardly to be wondered at that many planters and overseers considered sickness among their Negroes the greatest problem in plantation management. The handling of this problem differed widely from one plantation to another, depending upon the number of slaves, the location of the plantation, and the availability of trained physicians, as well as upon the ideas of those in charge.<sup>23</sup>

On some plantations a doctor was employed by the year,

<sup>20</sup> G. G. Johnson, *Ante-bellum North Carolina*, p. 749.

<sup>21</sup> Boyd, p. 192.

<sup>22</sup> *Southern Medical Reports*, I, 257, cited by Shryock, p. 173.

<sup>23</sup> Shryock thinks that the health of the slaves has probably been overrated. He points out the planters' desire for economy as leading to neglect and stresses the prevalence of uterine diseases and miscarriages, intestinal infections, hernia, and diseases resulting from lack of sanitation and personal cleanliness (pp. 174-75).

whose duty it was to look after the health of the slaves and to examine them periodically, as well as to come upon call. On others a sick nurse, usually the most intelligent woman on the place, had full authority, under a physician, over the sick; and the physician was called in only for serious cases. On still other plantations the master (or the mistress) kept a medical book and a supply of the more common medicines and did the doctoring himself except in the more serious cases; not infrequently the planter was the doctor for the whole community, white and Negro. Most of the planters seem to have been solicitous about their pregnant slaves: lighter duties were given them, their diet was more carefully supervised, and the actual delivery was looked after by a midwife, white or colored. The large plantations had their own "hospitals" or sickhouses; on the smaller ones the sick slaves stayed in their cabins and were nursed by the women in their own family or by those of the planter's family. Sick slaves were frequently given special diets. On some plantations dentists looked after the slaves' teeth. My impression is, however, that on few plantations was much done to insure the health of the slaves and that all too frequently the slaves' complaints of illness were mistakenly believed to be attempts to get out of work.<sup>24</sup>

It is even more difficult to generalize in regard to medical facilities in the frontier regions than it is for the more settled parts of the country. One is inclined to suspect that a large number of the physicians going to the new regions went there because they could not obtain a practice, or perhaps even legal permission to enter the medical profession, in the East. And, too, a large number of physicians would be more than offset by the sparsity of population. Therefore, probably not much value can be attached to the fact that the ratio of physicians to popu-

<sup>24</sup> I have drawn my conclusions from the following: Bassett, p. 87; Flanders, pp. 162 ff.; G. G. Johnson, *Ante-bellum North Carolina*, pp. 527-28; McDonald, p. 156; McDougale, *Journal of Negro History*, p. 73; Moody, pp. 82 ff.; Patterson, p. 67; and Phillips, *American Negro Slavery*, pp. 251-53; Long, pp. 19, 63; Olmsted, *Seaboard Slave States*, pp. 416, 696, and *Back Country*, pp. 77-78; Mallard, pp. 32-33; Smedes, *passim*; *De Bow's Review*, XXII (1857), 631-32, and XXIV (1858), 321 ff.; De Bow, *Industrial Resources*, II, 331-32, and IV, 177; and Starnes, pp. 494 ff.

lation was higher in the West than for any other part of the country.

Of medical practice in rural Illinois, Charles B. Johnson writes:

The principal diseases these doctors had to contend with were, in the colder season, pneumonia, commonly known as "winter fever," colds, coughs, and an occasional frost-bitten limb. In the warmer season, bowel troubles of various kinds, such as diarrhoea, dysentery, usually called "bloody flux," "summer complaint," cholera morbus, etc.

"Summer complaint" was the warm weather disease that most affected infants and was often fatal. Improper food was in most instances the cause of cholera morbus in grown people and "summer complaint" in children. Violent vomiting attended the inception of many diseases.

With the approach of the fall months a great many were stricken with "chills and fever," which certain ones always referred to as "ager" and others called "the shakes." Bilious fever was another form of malaria. Typhoid fever prevailed to an extent but was never called by that name, but was known as "nervous fever," "slow fever," "autumnal fever," etc.

Among accidents were broken bones, ax-cuts, snake-bites, and lacerated wounds from various causes and an occasional bullet wound.

A boy or girl that had not had measles, scarlet fever, chicken-pox and whooping cough was looked upon by his or her associates as little short of abnormal. . . .

At times real Asiatic cholera would claim its victims from among the residents of the village and surrounding country. When this disease was prevailing as an epidemic some one would visit St. Louis, unfortunately contract the disease and later give it to others.<sup>25</sup>

The doctors in that part of the country bled their patients on the slightest pretext and did their operating with septic and sometimes even rusty lancets.<sup>26</sup>

What sort of medical attention was available in some of the newest communities may be judged by the advertisement in a Denver paper of April, 1859, announcing that Dr. Peck would be "at home when not professionally engaged or digging gold in the mountains."<sup>27</sup> San Francisco, however, had taken on the

<sup>25</sup> *Illinois in the Fifties*, pp. 128-29; see also p. 118, and chap. xii, "Two Village Doctors."

<sup>26</sup> Beveridge, II, 200. For the doctors of Chicago and the facilities there for training them see James Nevins Hyde, *Early Medical Chicago* (Chicago: Fergus Printing Co., 1879).

<sup>27</sup> Lawrence W. Marshall, "Early Denver History as Told by Newspaper Advertisements," *Colorado Magazine*, VIII (1931), 171. Denver by this time had 13 physicians (Villard, *Past and Present*, pp. 131-32).



characteristics of a city, and its medical professional, with societies and journals, was much like that of the East. Medical fees continued to be higher than in other parts of the country.<sup>28</sup>

*Summary.*—One's impression is that by 1860 the work of a few careful, conscientious students and brilliant scientists had brought medicine at least to the threshold of its present "scientific" stage and that the medical profession had begun to provide for itself, chiefly through medical societies and associations, the discipline which was plainly necessary if the public was to receive the benefit of this advance. But in the United States this self-regulation had made little headway, there was almost no regulation by the state, and the great mass of the people, if their homemade remedies failed them, were most likely to resort either to patent medicines or to practitioners of a dubious sort of healing. Even if they went to respectable doctors of the orthodox tradition, the probability was that they intrusted themselves to a man without adequate training or experience. When Oliver Wendell Holmes declared, in 1860, that "if the whole *materia medica, as now used*, could be sunk to the bottom of the sea, it would be all the better for mankind,—and all the worse for the fishes,"<sup>29</sup> the statement shocked some of the profession but found a good many of its leaders in full agreement.

And this, it is to be remembered, was a time when the general public stood in need of the best medical care obtainable. The effects of the lack of physical labor and exercise in the cities were coming to be regarded as a serious problem, and the sanitary conditions in those cities were menacing to health. Moreover, bad cooking, a diet too narrowly limited on the Frontier and in parts of the South, too rich in other parts of the country, and the national habit of rapid eating, noted by so many travelers, were bound to result in stomach disorders. In the West the

<sup>28</sup> See the scale of charges quoted from the *San Francisco Medical Press* (1865) by Henry Harris in *California's Medical Story* (Springfield, Ill.: Charles C. Thomas, 1932), p. 183.

<sup>29</sup> The statement was first made in an address before the Massachusetts Medical Association, published in the *New York Evening Post* and reprinted in *Littell's Living Age*, XI (3d ser., 1860), 32; see also Hildegard Hawthorne, *The Happy Autocrat* (New York: Longmans, Green & Co., 1938), p. 127.

supposedly strong and healthy frontiersmen were all too often the victims of fevers and agues, particularly in the river bottoms of the Mississippi and its tributaries. Meanwhile, the people continued to regard health and longevity as due to the specific physical endowment of each person and to accept their ills as sent them by Providence.

The things one would most like to know—how often doctors were called in and how much good they were once they were called in—remain elusive. There is every reason to believe that even in the Northeast great reliance was placed upon the old family remedies and other home medication. In the South this was even more true; and few families were without quinine, calomel, nux vomica, spirits of niter, castor oil, paregoric, laudanum, alum, and liniments. Guion Griffis Johnson writes that “the average ante-bellum family called a doctor only in an emergency or when every other curative means had failed” and that much use was made of native remedies, either a matter of family tradition or compounded from instructions in almanacs or in books on family medicine.<sup>30</sup> In some communities, as I have said, the master of the large plantation was not only the doctor for his plantation but for the whole community. The services of a doctor were especially likely to be dispensed with in childbirth cases, except in cases of abnormal delivery; the much greater number of midwives in the South is significant, however much the precise figures may be questioned. In parts of the South, at least, the midwife or granny frequently delivered the sons of the rich as well as of the poor, and in few cases was an anesthetic used in childbirth. In Illinois the standard remedies for malaria were quinine, calomel, and whisky, which anyone could administer; and on the Frontier most of the families knew, or thought they knew, how to look after at least the more common diseases.<sup>31</sup>

But with all that has been said to indicate distrust of the physician, the fact remains that in the big city the family doctor

<sup>30</sup> *Ante-bellum North Carolina*, pp. 752-54.

<sup>31</sup> See Leroy G. Davis, “Frontier Home Remedies and Sanitation,” *Minnesota History*, XIX (1938), 369-76.

was the trusted confidant of his patients and their adviser on many problems not much concerned with medicine. In the smaller communities the doctor was likely to be respected for his training and position, and in rural areas he was a real hero, though perhaps not always appreciated. And however much some people distrusted the medical profession (as some still do today), there were others whose faith in it was unquestioning.

#### HOSPITALS, CLINICS, AND DISPENSARIES

*Hospitals.*—We who take hospitals so much for granted must find it surprising that there were so few hospitals in the fifties and sixties. *The Modern Hospital Year Book* for 1924 reported that in 1873 there were only 149 hospitals and allied institutions in the country, one-third of them for the insane; fifty years later there were 6,762. The number of beds increased during the same period from 35,453 to 770,375. As late as 1900 there were only about 150 clinics compared with the more than 5,000 in 1925. And in certain fields, as tuberculosis sanitariums, the entire development has taken place in the twentieth century.<sup>32</sup>

That there were so few hospitals is in large part a reflection of the general attitude toward them. People expected to be treated, and even to be operated on, in their own homes or in the doctor's office. Hospitals and clinics were, at least until the last quarter of the century, simply institutions for the relief of the sick poor,<sup>33</sup> with the subsidiary function of supplying a place for medical education. John Green, whose views on hospital construction were far in advance of his time, nevertheless wrote that

hospitals are essentially charitable institutions, and the welfare of the patients must ever hold the first place in the minds of their founders. Nevertheless, we must not lose sight of the fact, that they are also our great schools of clinical observation and instruction; and have thus, perhaps, rendered their most important service to mankind.<sup>34</sup>

<sup>32</sup> Cited in Michael M. Davis, *Clinics, Hospitals, and Health Centers* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1927), pp. 4-5.

<sup>33</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 10.

<sup>34</sup> *City Hospitals* (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1861), p. 14.

And W. Gill Wylie, whose book was awarded the Boylston prize by Harvard, still believed in 1877 that hospitals were necessary for the destitute sick and for medical education but that, as managed, they did more harm than good by removing the "healthful stimulus of necessity" essential to recovery. He believed we should "limit hospital accommodations to those who have no homes and to those who cannot be assisted at their homes."<sup>35</sup>

There was some tendency for people to resort to hospitals for serious operations; and in a part of the country where there were no hospitals the doctor might provide a miniature hospital of his own for the reception and care of his patients, while those who could afford it and were able to make the trip might go some little distance to a hospital.<sup>36</sup> A number of cities also maintained permanent or temporary isolation hospitals or "pest-houses" for persons with communicable diseases. But people still associated hospitals with charity and probably had a deep-seated, though not always rational, distrust of them. For the most part the hospitals of 1860 were simply institutions maintained through public or private charity, where the indigent poor could be cared for more economically than in their homes.

This partly accounts for the fact that, while a good deal was known about how hospitals should be built (Green's book is an example), in construction, equipment, and hygiene the hospitals actually in use fell far short of a desirable standard. Wylie could write that previous to 1859 neither England nor the United States had a hospital comparing favorably with the plan proposed by Dr. John Jones in 1773.<sup>37</sup> The incurable, the insane, and chronic cases were sent to the same hospitals as were those suffering from communicable diseases or in need of operations; and the same ward—there were few private rooms, since almost all patients were charity patients—might contain several kinds of patient. Because of the lack of segregation and because of the

<sup>35</sup> *Hospitals: Their History, Organization, and Construction* (New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1877), pp. 60 and 67.

<sup>36</sup> Cf. G. G. Johnson, *Ante-bellum North Carolina*, pp. 743-44.

<sup>37</sup> P. 43.

failure to take even the most obvious sanitary precautions, epidemics broke out from time to time within the hospital walls and made it necessary to close even such hospitals as the Massachusetts General and the public hospital in Baltimore. The outpatient clinics were then, and remained throughout the century, hardly better than prescription mills, which without even a pretense of adequate diagnosis passed out prescriptions which might do the patients as much harm as good.<sup>38</sup>

The Massachusetts General Hospital, though one of the best, made no attempt to classify or segregate its patients, and the general sanitary conditions were none too good. During 1860, 1,394 patients were treated, 1,137 of them wholly free (no one was refused admission, whether or not he could pay anything), and about two-fifths of them Irish immigrants.<sup>39</sup> The outpatient department, by 1858, had 1,574 patients and a special physician.<sup>40</sup> Boston had also a lying-in hospital, likewise privately endowed and maintained, and a hospital used by the state to care for immigrants who were ill when they arrived. These were about the only hospitals in New England.

New York's Bellevue Hospital was a dilapidated building, with many additions, having an 800-bed capacity and admitting 7,000 or 8,000 pauper patients a year. There were no night nurses, the day nurses were ignorant and overworked, and the sanitary conditions were shocking.<sup>41</sup> The New York Hospital was better, and St. Luke's Hospital was one of the city's show places. There were a number of other hospitals, public and private, in New York City and Brooklyn and several others, most of them small and totally inadequate, elsewhere in the state.

The Pennsylvania Hospital in Philadelphia had in 1860 a history of over a century, but its capacity was still only 200 or 300 beds; from 1851 to 1855 the hospital received 8,845 patients, of

<sup>38</sup> M. M. Davis, p. 15.

<sup>39</sup> Massachusetts General Hospital, *Report of the Board of Trustees for the Year 1860* (Boston, 1861).

<sup>40</sup> "The Outpatient Department," *Massachusetts General Hospital: Memorial and Historical Volume* (Boston, 1921), pp. 153-56.

<sup>41</sup> Cf. Wylie, pp. 3-4 and 187; also Packard, I, 253-61. One of the sensational news stories of 1860 was the eating of a newly born child by rats in Bellevue.

whom 6,117 were charity and 1,728 paying patients.<sup>42</sup> Philadelphia paupers were for the most part treated at the Philadelphia Hospital, which was a part of the Almshouse; patients were overcrowded, poorly fed, and improperly mingled, and the sanitary conditions there were as bad as, or worse than, those of the hospitals of Boston and New York. Nevertheless, in January, 1858, there were 3,000 inmates, and many were being refused admission.<sup>43</sup> There were several smaller hospitals, and the Episcopal Hospital (built in 1860) was probably the best-constructed hospital in the country.

There were hospitals, of a sort, in Pittsburgh, Cincinnati, Detroit, Chicago, Milwaukee, St. Louis, and other northern cities. Several of them were conducted under the auspices of the Catholic church.

Baltimore had a public hospital, its sanitary condition as bad as those existing elsewhere, which served as a hospital for the poor and sometimes as a pesthouse. There were a few small hospitals in Baltimore, perhaps one in Richmond, one in Charleston, one in Savannah, one in Mobile, and two or three small ones in Louisville. Elsewhere in the South there were no regular hospitals except in New Orleans, where the Charity Hospital, admitting annually more than 11,000 patients, was one of the worst in the country.<sup>44</sup>

There were two or three hospitals in San Francisco, and Sacramento and Los Angeles each had a hospital of a sort. In addition to these hospitals there were, scattered over the country, several United States marine hospitals, maintained by the federal government for the benefit of sick sailors and paid for out of

<sup>42</sup> Scharf and Wescott, II, 1670-72; see also Thomas G. Morton, *The History of the Pennsylvania Hospital, 1751-1895* (rev. ed.; Philadelphia: Times Printing House, 1897); and Packard, I, 181-230.

<sup>43</sup> Charles Lawrence, *History of the Philadelphia Almshouses and Hospitals from the Beginning of the Eighteenth to the Ending of the Nineteenth Centuries* ([Philadelphia, 1905], *passim*; see also D. Hayes Agnew et al., *History and Reminiscences of the Philadelphia Almshouse and Philadelphia Hospital* (Philadelphia: Detre & Blackburn, 1890); and Packard, I, 246-50.

<sup>44</sup> Elizabeth Wisner, *Public Welfare Administration in Louisiana* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1930), pp. 38-49; see also Packard, I, 261-65.

a 20-cent-a-month fee deducted from their wages. Aside from the lying-in hospitals (there were such hospitals in Boston, New York, and Philadelphia, and perhaps in other cities), the only hospitals specializing in a specific sort of patient were the eye and ear hospitals, in New London, New York, Philadelphia, Boston, Baltimore, and Chicago.<sup>45</sup>

*Dispensaries.*—In the very largest cities there were dispensaries where the poor could secure medical advice and prescriptions. The Boston Dispensary, in 1859, treated 14,426 patients and filled 34,685 prescriptions.<sup>46</sup> New York City's five largest dispensaries in 1859 treated 134,468 persons, filled 262,683 prescriptions, and vaccinated 12,667 persons;<sup>47</sup> and there was a number of smaller dispensaries. There were dispensaries in Philadelphia; and dispensaries were conducted in connection with hospitals in Chicago, St. Louis, and Baltimore. Apparently some other cities had dispensaries, although I find no clear record of any.

*Other medical care for the poor.*—There was no public health nursing in the United States until 1877,<sup>48</sup> nor was there any substitute, except as charitable institutions or persons might look after the health of their clients.

In the North, except in the larger cities, the sick poor were cared for much as were other poor. The township or county might contract for medical services for all its poor, might pay for individual service, or might contract its poor out and let the contractor see to the medical attention. In many states the sick poor were cared for in poorhouses or on poor farms, and, in a few, special infirmaries were built. There were a few local exceptions, but in general the treatment was inadequate and sometimes brutal.

<sup>45</sup> For these hospitals see Alvin A. Hubbell, *The Development of Ophthalmology in America, 1800 to 1870* (Chicago: W. T. Keener & Co., 1908), pp. 17-36, 158 ff.; and the reports of the hospitals themselves.

<sup>46</sup> Boston Dispensary, *By-laws and Statement of Operations for the Year Ending October 1, 1859* (Boston: John Wilson & Son, 1860), pp. 11-12, 25-26.

<sup>47</sup> *American Medical Times*, I (1860), 284.

<sup>48</sup> Ravenal, p. 441.

## CARE OF THE DEFECTIVE CLASSES

*The feeble-minded and insane.*—It is very difficult for a layman to know what to say about the treatment of the mentally defective in the fifties. It is difficult to find out what those best informed believed about the proper handling of such persons and still more difficult to find out how far practice had changed in conformance with these beliefs. While lunatic asylums had ceased to be regarded as places to go for an afternoon's amusement, there can be no doubt that the inmates were usually ill cared for and not infrequently mistreated.

During the thirties and forties there were persistent attempts on the part of earnest reformers, the best-known of them being Miss Dorothea Dix, to better the condition of insane patients. Their investigations revealed many instances in which the insane were horribly mistreated and called attention to the fact that the insane and the idiotic were for the most part confined in poorhouses, with orphans, the aged, the infirm, drunkards, and sufferers from all sorts of diseases. This condition seems to have been quite generally true in the fifties, also. But during the forties doctors from some of the leading American institutions had visited Europe and studied the most approved practices; on their return they had designed better hospitals and better systems of treatment. When the institutions were under the charge of those who were trained in their profession, the patients were treated with kindness: every effort was made to build up their health, regular hours were insisted upon, and work and recreation provided.

By 1860 only about half-a-dozen states and territories were without institutions for the insane and the feeble-minded. Some were public, some private, and in a few of the private ones the poor were maintained at the expense of the state. As far as one can judge, however, only a very small proportion of the mentally defective were in special institutions; by far the greater number of them were cared for at home, and most of those who were public charges were kept in county jails, houses of correction, and poorhouses. The asylums and hospitals for the insane



were overcrowded, there was lack of proper segregation, and they exhibited all the evils resulting from lack of knowledge and lack of money.

*The deaf, dumb, and blind.*—There were in 1860 about 20 special institutions where the deaf and dumb could be cared for, and more than 20 for the blind. Only a very small proportion of the deaf, dumb, and blind could be accepted by these institutions, nor was there much that could be done for those admitted except to feed and clothe them. There was no use of Braille, and the few books published in raised letters for the blind were prohibitively expensive. There was little vocational training for the blind, and such attempts as were made to improve their condition usually consisted in such things as literary and musical ventures. The deaf, the dumb, and the blind were all of them, like the mentally defective, kept at home unless they became public charges, in which case they were more likely to be kept in the poorhouse than in a special institution.

#### PUBLIC HYGIENE

*Control of communicable diseases.*—Most dreaded of the epidemic diseases were cholera and yellow fever. Severe epidemics of cholera spread across the country in 1849 and 1854—there were local epidemics in other years—starting in the South and extending all the way to New England; thousands died in the big cities. There was no known precaution to take—crude attempts at fumigation and fasting and prayer were the best that could be done. Yellow fever was the perennial scourge of the South. In the 1853 epidemic there were 30,000 cases in New Orleans alone, 7,000 or 8,000 dying. During the fifties there were repeated epidemics in the South, that of 1855 taking thousands of lives in Norfolk and Portsmouth, Virginia. Even northern cities—Chicago, Philadelphia, New York—were occasionally attacked. Since the cause of yellow fever was still unknown, there was no consensus as to what to do about it. As late as 1878–79 yellow fever could kill 4,000 in Memphis in a single epidemic; and not until then were determined efforts made to prevent similar outbreaks in the future.

Typhoid fever was an unduly prevalent and fatal concomitant of civilization; the proximate cause of it was known, but its specific cause had not been discovered. In New York City, in the early sixties, there were as many as 12,000 cases a year. Epidemics of typhus fever were also common and broke out from time to time in New York City even in the sixties; meanwhile, the city police had no authority to abate nuisances in tenement cases.

Smallpox was still widely prevalent; the prejudice against vaccination had not died out, and only rarely was there a local vaccination requirement—and, for that matter, the method of vaccination was still far from perfect. Seaports were particularly subject to smallpox epidemics, though in the light of the unsanitary conditions of the cities they could hardly put all the blame on immigrants. In the South and West malaria was so prevalent as to be taken for granted, and in a large part of the country many had frequent attacks of ague. Diphtheria was not believed to be communicable, and no precautions were taken against its spread. Scarlet fever levied a heavy toll, and dysentery struck whole communities from time to time. Tuberculosis was still believed to be incurable and was consequently both more prevalent and more often fatal than is easily believed. Sporadic outbreaks of erysipelas troubled the cities.

There were no state boards of health in 1860, and the city health administrations, where they existed, had little knowledge of how to go about preventing the spread of epidemic diseases. As a result there were few, if any, places where reporting of disease was carefully observed, though in some cities certification as to cause of death was a legal requirement. Voluntary reporting was nowhere a success; but in Baltimore, for instance, it was not until 1882 that laws were passed requiring prompt reporting of even certain acute febrile diseases, and not until 1890 were the whole list of communicable diseases reported in considerable numbers.<sup>49</sup>

Maritime quarantine was apparently a general practice long before other forms of quarantine were thought necessary. At all

<sup>49</sup> Howard, pp. 108 and 150.

important seaports there were facilities for the inspection of vessels, crews, and passengers, sometimes quarantine hospitals, sometimes a compulsory vaccination requirement. It is impossible at this late date to evaluate the efficiency of these quarantine administrations, but in many instances they seem not to have been very effective. In the few cities where house quarantine was a legal requirement there seems to have been little attempt to enforce it. More common was the maintenance of a special pesthouse for the isolation of the victims of epidemics; even these were usually opened only after the epidemic had become serious. Persons carrying the germs of smallpox and other diseases were free to walk the streets, ride the horsecars, attend school and public gatherings.

Practice in regard to vaccination differed widely among the various states and cities. Almost nowhere was vaccination compulsory; but, while the number of deaths from smallpox seems high by twentieth-century standards, it was much lower than would have been thought possible a generation earlier. Massachusetts had seemingly rigorous vaccination requirements, but they did not keep Boston from being one of the focal points for the spread of smallpox; in New York few were vaccinated except in periods of public alarm. In the country as a whole there was apparently just enough vaccination to prevent epidemics of serious proportions, and such epidemics as did break out were checked by voluntary or mandatory vaccination on a large scale.

*Municipal cleanliness.*—A major problem of public health, and one which grew more serious from year to year, was that of disposing of the contents of privies. Water closets were still luxuries, and even in the larger cities only the well-to-do had them. In rural districts the privies were seldom a menace to health, but in the crowded tenement districts of the large cities the uncared-for privies poured their contents over the courts, streets, and alleys; and even in the better sections they were likely to overflow or to drain into the water supply. In some cities the public authorities could condemn as nuisances overflowing privy vaults and regulate the cleaning of vaults and removal of their

contents. In others property-owners did as they pleased. In such cities as New York the rotting heaps of animal manure were another menace to public health.

The lack of facilities for the disposal of garbage and other household refuse was hardly less serious. In most of the larger cities the garbage was collected twice a week or oftener, either by a contractor or by the city, and used to feed pigs; dry refuse was also carted away and usually sold as dirt for filling in land. But even in these cities the removal was inefficient (in New York overflowing boxes of garbage and ashes stood in the streets, while in the tenement districts streets were inches deep in garbage; in Chicago refuse from one section of the city was frequently dumped into another), and in many there was no system at all for the removal of refuse. Garbage was thrown into the streets and alleys; and pigs and dogs, in cities from New York down, served as scavengers. In some cities the scavengers were geese, and in many southern cities buzzards cleaned up the garbage.

One is accustomed to think of sewers as a development centuries old, and it comes as something of a shock to learn that as late as 1860 hardly an American city had an adequate drainage system, even for storm water. J. J. Cosgrove writes:

Reliable data concerning the construction of sewers were not obtainable in the United States until long after the close of the Civil War. In 1859, when Julius W. Adams was commissioned to prepare plans for sewerage the city of Brooklyn, N.Y., which at that time covered an area of twenty square miles, a great proportion of which was suburban territory, the engineering profession was wholly without data of any kind in proportioning sewers for the drainage of cities and towns.<sup>50</sup>

That is not to say that sewers were then unknown in this country. Boston had a sewer system, of sorts, which dated from the seventeenth century; in contrast was the system—the first comprehensive sewerage project of the country—which E. S. Cheshbrough had designed for Chicago in 1855. Several cities during the fifties sponsored research commissions on sewerage engineering. But the neglect of drainage and sewerage continued, in

<sup>50</sup> *History of Sanitation* (Pittsburgh: Standard Sanitary Mfg. Co., 1909), p. 87.

the main, until the epidemic of yellow fever in Memphis in 1879 disclosed the unsanitary condition of that city and led other cities to re-examine their own conditions.

The sewerage systems of Boston, New York, and Philadelphia drained only parts of those cities; many of the sewers and inlets were clogged, and the systems were so poorly designed that the stench issuing from the inlets and outlets was almost intolerable. Brooklyn and Chicago were building new systems, but they were still inadequate—by 1866 only an eighth of the city was served by Chicago's sewers. Elsewhere in the country most cities and towns had only surface drainage; in others storm-water sewers drained parts of the town; in still others there were privately owned systems or public sewers to which property-owners could connect their private drains.

In only the biggest cities was there much paving, and even in these the streets were always filthy. In Philadelphia and New York the city contracted for the cleaning of the streets; but in New York, at least, the contractors failed to carry out their duties faithfully, and property-owners sometimes had to hire the streets cleaned. In Boston the city did its own street-cleaning, but the results were not much better. Baltimore, in the fifties, put street-cleaning in charge of the commissioner of health. In few other cities was there any official action at all.

*The sanitary condition of buildings.*—That the medical profession, and with it enlightened public opinion, was beginning to recognize the dangers to health lurking in the tenements is abundantly illustrated in the reports of private and public agencies interested in the tenement problem. But, in view of the lack of progress made in general health administration, it is not surprising that little was done to improve tenement conditions or to abate the nuisances existing in other forms of private property. In New York "great blocks of slums were owned by men who resisted all sanitary improvements by securing from the Tammany-ridden city health department appointments as 'health officers' in a system of sanitary police provided for in 1860."<sup>51</sup> Pressure for improvement in New York resulted, in

<sup>51</sup> A. C. Cole, pp. 181-82.

1866, in the creation by the State of the Metropolitan Health Board. That board found New York City with 18,582 tenement houses; and its first investigation revealed more than half of these in bad sanitary condition, a third suffering from overcrowding, accumulated filth, lack of a water supply, and other defects.<sup>52</sup> But the police had no authority to abate nuisances in infected tenements, and the epidemics of typhus fever during the sixties were blamed on tenement conditions.<sup>53</sup> In 1866 the "first resting place and permanent abode of cholera" was in the tenements.<sup>54</sup> The first Tenement House Law, in 1879, did hardly more than attempt to legislate out of existence interior unventilated rooms in future construction. Legislation regarding light requirements came even later, and not until 1901 were water closets required.<sup>55</sup>

Other cities had the same problems, especially such cities as Providence, Boston, Lowell, Philadelphia, and the others into which new immigrants were steadily pouring. Massachusetts and Pennsylvania gave the cities some police powers to abate nuisances, but there is nothing to indicate that any effective action was taken. Not until later in the century did any city begin to take much interest in the relations between buildings and health.

*Regulation of food and markets.*—There was a great deal of adulteration of food in the fifties; its retail sale was frequently made under unsanitary conditions, and the wholesale markets were many of them filthy. Much of the milk supply of the cities came from swill-milk establishments—dairies within the cities which fed their cows chiefly on distillery refuse; the unsanitary condition of these dairies often menaced the city's health both by polluting the atmosphere and by infecting the milk. The dangers of failure to provide safeguards for the food supply were coming to be recognized, but as yet little was being done to remedy the situation. New York's city inspector, to judge by

<sup>52</sup> Edward B. Dalton, "Annual Report of the Metropolitan Board of Health," *North American Review*, CVI (1868), 355.

<sup>53</sup> Ravenal, pp. 4-5.

<sup>54</sup> Dalton, p. 358.

<sup>55</sup> Ravenal, pp. 325-29.

his reports, was making some progress in his efforts to rid the city of unhealthful meat and other food, but he still found much to complain of in the city's markets. Some other cities exercised a degree of control over their food supplies,<sup>56</sup> but there seems to have been little official restraint.

*Regulation of offensive trades.*—Industrial hazards to public health were making themselves felt in 1860. Gas fumes and smoke nuisances were not the serious menaces they became later, but other forms of business did contribute problems which few communities had attempted to solve—slaughterhouses, livery stables, rendering plants, even junk and manure heaps were without regulation, and except in a few of the largest cities animals had the freedom of the streets. The slaughterhouse was perhaps the most conspicuous of these evils. From the smallest communities to the largest cities the meat supply came from the slaughterhouses, located within its limits and subject to little if any regulation.

In New York slaughterhouses were to be found in all parts of the city; blood ran over the floors and out into the streets.<sup>57</sup> There were manure heaps near crowded parts of town, and—until 1859—piggeries and offal-boiling establishments within the city. The fat-boiling establishments, the downtown livery stables, the driving of cattle and hogs through crowded streets, the swill-milk stables, the gas-manufacturing plants—all needed attention. These problems were common to all large cities, while in such cities as Pittsburgh smoke had already become a serious problem.

*The public health movement.*—A few cities had boards of health in 1860—there were boards in Philadelphia and Boston, rather

<sup>56</sup> "Food inspection began to assume an importance unknown in the first years of [Chicago's] municipal life. In 1857 the legislature provided for a city fish inspector to determine and certify the weight, condition, and content of barrels of fish shipped. Other barreled foods such as meal, flour, salt pork, and beef also were inspected under the regulations of the council. Bread, too, came within the list of foods regulated, an act of 1861 prescribing the weight and quality of loaves; in the 'sixties milk was examined; and in 1870 an ordinance required that skimmed milk be so labeled" (Pierce, II, 335).

<sup>57</sup> In such western packing centers as Chicago the packing-houses and slaughter-houses were a still greater problem than in the East, while any attempt at solution seemed likely to interfere with the cities' prosperity (cf. Pierce, II, 336-37).

ephemeral boards were set up in Chicago from time to time, and a few smaller cities had health administrations—but not until 1869 (in Massachusetts) was there a state board of health. Once that beginning had been made, the idea spread rapidly; when Connecticut established its Board in 1878 there were already

TABLE 7\*  
MORTALITY RATES IN SEVEN CITIES  
1860 AND 1930

CITY	DEATHS PER THOUSAND OF POPULATION	
	Before 1860	1930
Providence.....	20.0 (1858)	12.9
Boston.....	25.1 (1855)	14.1
New York City†.....	36.9 (1857)	10.8
Philadelphia.....	27.6 (1857)	12.2
Baltimore.....	27.6 (1850)	13.9
Chicago.....	20.7 (1860)	10.4
St. Louis.....	31.1 (1860)	13.9

\* The 1930 figures are from *U.S. Statistical Abstract*, LVII (1935), p. 84, Table 79. Figures for the earlier period come from New York State Senate, *Report of Selected Committee Appointed To Investigate the Health Department of the City of New York*, pp. 10-11; *Annual Report of the Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor for the Year 1859*, p. 26; Isaac D. Rawlings, *The Rise and Fall of Disease in Illinois* (Springfield, Ill.: Schnepf & Barnes, 1927-28), I, 107; Andreas, II, 555; *One Hundred Years of Medicine and Surgery in Missouri* (St. Louis: St. Louis Star, 1900), p. 158. In each case the rate is for an apparently "normal" year—there were higher rates in epidemic years.

† New York City's rate was high for all years (the average for 1861-65 was 38.0). Note, however, the comment of the city inspector in his report for 1860: the death rate was high because of more complete returns and because of the inclusion in the city's totals of those found dead on near-by waters, steamship and railroad routes, etc.

16 others in existence.<sup>58</sup> In the fifties and early sixties there was no public health "movement"; there was only a continuous agitation for reform on the part of a few physicians, the newspapers, citizens' associations, charitable and philanthropic institutions, and other public-spirited groups.

A comparison of death rates before and after the achievements of the public health movement (see Table 7) is not with-

<sup>58</sup> C.-E. A. Winslow, *The Evolution and Significance of the Modern Public Health Campaign* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1923), p. 26).



out significance, although it must be remembered that no allowance has been made for changes in age and sex distributions and that the earlier reports are incomplete and inaccurate.

#### BURIAL

Visitors from abroad were interested in the funeral processions they saw in the United States. The lodges, the military and fire companies, and other societies conducted funerals for their members; and not infrequently the big black hearse, its plate-glass sides revealing the ornamented coffin within, would be accompanied by a long procession of marching men, with perhaps a band. The English were likely to be distressed, however, at the forthright manner in which the business aspect of death and burial was treated.<sup>59</sup> J. D. Burns put the cost of a "decent burial" at \$25-\$30, and one for the "proud" at \$50-\$100. This seems a conservative statement.<sup>60</sup>

Until the thirties little attention was paid to cemeteries; and the usual burial places were desolate graveyards, overgrown with grass and weeds and neglected; usually their fences were dilapidated, the headstones fallen, the tombs crumbling. But, beginning in 1837, more and more cemeteries were carefully laid out and landscaped—indeed, these cemeteries, such as Boston's Mount Auburn, New York's Greenwood, Philadelphia's Laurel Hill, Cincinnati's Spring Grove, and others, seem to have been the predecessors of and the inspiration for the public parks which came later. Paupers were buried in plots on county poor farms, or in "potter's fields"—New York City was burying nearly three thousand a year in its new pauper cemetery on Ward's Island.

<sup>59</sup> Disher, pp. 235-36; Duncan, pp. 23, 235-36; Burns, pp. 112-13; see also Beadle, p. 8.

<sup>60</sup> See the estimates cited in Frederick L. Hoffman, *Pauper Burials and the Interment of the Dead in Large Cities; Address Read at the National Conference of Social Work, Atlantic City, June 4, 1911*. The common charge for burial in Boston in 1850 was as follows: rights in public tomb, \$6.00; pine coffin, \$7.00; city registrar's and undertaker's fees, \$6.00. This was a total of \$19.00, exclusive of carriage and extras. A family lot at Mount Auburn was \$100.00, and the expense of burial there about \$15.00, besides the cost of carriages (*ibid.*, p. 25). A "typical" funeral in 1853 would cost about \$84.00, including rosewood coffin, undertaker's charges, hearse and three carriages, and other incidentals (p. 39).

## CHAPTER IX

### TRANSPORTATION AND COMMUNICATION

#### INTERURBAN TRANSPORTATION

*Travel in the fifties.*—In the early years of the nineteenth century the people of the United States had been provincial in their outlook. Insularity was forced upon them by their poverty and by the lack of good roads. These people knew only their own communities; they were as ignorant of the next state as they were of foreign countries. Their loyalties were to township (or to county or some other local subdivision) and to state rather than to the United States.

By the middle of the century this insularity, this provinciality—and there was much that was good about it—was being pretty well broken down. First, the turnpike and the stage-coach, then the steamboat, and then the railroad had made it possible for people to travel. Travel, in comparison with what it had always been before, became cheap, convenient, comfortable, and rapid. I am here interested only in the availability of passenger transportation as a part of the level of living; the effects of these changes in transportation in bringing about new ways of thinking and in hastening a spirit of restlessness, a desire to be always on the move, are of much greater significance, although I can say nothing about them here.

*The railroad.*—In 1860 there were 30,000 miles of railroad in operation; in 1850 there had been only 9,000, but the expansion of the railroads continued well into the twentieth century, reaching 264,000 miles in 1920.

By 1861, eight roads linked the Atlantic and the Mississippi; Boston, New York, Philadelphia, and Baltimore all being termini of trunk lines while, in the South, the Western and Atlantic of Georgia tied Atlanta into the Mississippi Basin via the Nashville and Chattanooga, and the Richmond and Charleston went westward via the Nashville and Chattanooga, the Central Virginia and the Southside Railroad. The attainment of the Mississippi by

the Memphis and Charleston, in 1859, climaxed the South's expansion—one which totaled some 8,000 miles of steel between the Ohio and the Gulf of Mexico. In the Mississippi Valley itself, in addition to the Illinois Central, the important roads, out of many, were the Mobile and Ohio, and the New Orleans, Jackson and Northern, the latter connecting with the Mississippi Central. To the north, the Michigan Central and the Michigan Southern roads raced spectacularly westward from Ohio, reaching Chicago only forty-eight hours apart.<sup>1</sup>

The northern system was the more complete: there were few places, except in the most outlying states, as much as twenty-five miles from a railroad. The South's achievements, measured in miles, were smaller, but the South's area and population were also smaller. "By 1860 every province of the South east of the Mississippi had been put in railway communication with every other province and with the outside world."<sup>2</sup> The West was also fairly well served: by 1860, railroads from the Great Lakes touched the Mississippi at ten points and the Ohio at eight; west of the Mississippi there were a number of lines extending into Iowa, Wisconsin, and Missouri and a few miles of construction in Arkansas.

Railroad construction had begun with the construction of short, local lines, either bringing cities into closer contact with their rural markets or connecting near-by cities. Despite a tendency toward consolidation during the fifties—the New York Central and the Pennsylvania systems were the accomplishment of that decade—there were still more than 300 lines in 1860. It was still impossible to go from Boston to New York or from New York or Philadelphia to Washington without changing trains, and travel between New York and Chicago involved several changes. One could travel by rail all the way from New Orleans to Portland, Maine, but to do so one had to use thirteen different roads. The only point of physical contact between the railroads of the North and those of the South was the Louisville and Nashville at Bowling Green.

<sup>1</sup> William H. Clark, *Railroads and Rivers* (Boston: L. C. Page & Co., 1939), pp. 154-55.

<sup>2</sup> U. B. Phillips, "Transportation in the Ante-bellum South," *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, XIX (1905), 451.

The lack of integrated systems was complicated by the lack of a standard gauge—in 1860 eleven different gauges were still in use in the North. Travel between Lake Erie and Lake Michigan involved five complete changes of trains, and even the Pennsylvania had to change at Pittsburgh. This and other deficiencies of the railroads were being rectified during the fifties, though not a great deal had been accomplished by the end of the decade. One notes, for instance, a tendency toward the use of a standard gauge of four feet, eight and a half inches and toward using T-rails on wooden crossties. While practically all lines were still burning wood, there were frequent experiments with coal as fuel. A few splendid terminals had been built; but in general the railroads still suffered from deficiencies of station, depot, and terminal facilities. Roadbeds also left much to be desired, from the standpoint either of comfort or of safety, despite improvements in ties, ballast, chairs, frogs, switches, and crossings. Approaches to the big cities were usually double-tracked, but as yet no railroad was double-tracked over its entire length. Automatic signals of a sort were in use, and most of the northern lines (few in the South) were using the telegraph in train control. A number of important railroad bridges had been built<sup>3</sup> and a few tunnels; but many of the most important crossings—such as those over the Delaware and the Susquehanna and over the Hudson at Albany—still required ferries.

Allan Nevins describes the train of the middle fifties as a curious affair: rough wooden cars heated by stoves, wood-burning locomotives with big-bellied smokestacks and drive-wheels still often at the front instead of the back, hand brakes, uneven couplings, and bumpy tracks.<sup>4</sup> The passenger car of the fifties had a body about fifty feet long, ten feet wide, and seven feet high, seating about sixty persons. The seats were cushioned, and the cars warmed, ventilated, and lighted; but they needed better springing, reclining seats, and better arrangements for braking,

<sup>3</sup> See T. C. Clarke, "Railway-engineering in the United States," *Atlantic Monthly*, II (1858), 647-48.

<sup>4</sup> Allan Nevins, *Abram S. Hewitt: With Some Account of Peter Cooper* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1935), p. 156.

coupling, heating, and lighting. A new passenger car adopted by the Erie in 1856 was sixty feet, three inches long and ten feet, nine inches wide; its height at the center was seven inches greater than that of any previous car. There were twenty windows on each side—single-plate, double-thick French glass, seventeen by twenty-one inches—and two windows at each end. Seventy-four passengers could be seated, two of them in the “saloon.” It had large and easy reclining seats, splendidly upholstered, and an improved system of ventilation powered by a friction wheel on the axle—but it was still using rubber springs.<sup>5</sup> On some roads the new cars were being equipped with water closets and lavatories. Most of the cars in use, however, were older models; and those off the trunk lines were likely to be uncomfortable, poorly heated and ventilated, and dirty. Conductors had not yet been put in uniform and seem to have had little interest in the comfort and convenience of the passengers. Also present were the vendors of books, newspapers, and magazines, of fruits, candies, knickknacks of all kinds, and of patent medicines; some lines had boys pass through the cars with glasses of free ice water.

This single type of car was still, in the main, expected to accommodate all classes of passengers and to serve for both day and night service, although by 1860 various types of special cars had begun to appear. In the late fifties some of the lines put on smoking cars. Despite the common belief that sleeping cars were not commonly used until Pullman built his “Pioneer” in the sixties, by the late fifties all main lines were using sleeping cars on all their night trains. These cars, it is true, were a far cry from the modern Pullman. They were cars of ordinary size provided with three rows of bunks on each side; usually mattresses were furnished but seldom much in the way of bed clothing, and there was not a great deal of privacy. But the design of sleeping cars was being continually improved, and some of those

<sup>5</sup> J. L. Ringwalt, *Development of Transportation Systems in the United States* (Philadelphia: The Author, 1888), p. 163. For a more technical description of the American railroad car of the fifties see the report of Captain Galton, quoted in James McMillan, “American Car Building,” *One Hundred Years of American Commerce*, I, 115-16.

in use by 1860 must have been fairly comfortable. On some trains there were special coaches assigned to women passengers. The dining car had not yet made its appearance, and passengers had to take their meals at restaurants at or near the stations.

Although Robert Ferguson in the early sixties thought the speed of English trains exceeded that of American trains by 40 per cent,<sup>6</sup> running speeds had during the fifties been increased to about thirty miles an hour.<sup>7</sup> With these higher speeds came many serious accidents, which received much space in the periodicals of the time and led to futile attempts to secure safety by legal enactments. The number of accidents, however, seems to have been reduced steadily during the fifties.<sup>8</sup>

The finest trains were the expresses of the Northeast. Both the New York Central and the Pennsylvania scheduled 40-mile-an-hour trains between New York and Chicago by 1861,<sup>9</sup> though speeds of 25 and 30 miles an hour were more common. Trains over the newly constructed lines in the Frontier not only were rough riding, because of the hasty construction, but were slower, sometimes running only eight or nine miles an hour. Southern trains also were neither so comfortable nor so attractive in appearance as those of the North and were, for the most part, slower. Running speeds of 15-20 miles an hour seem to have been usual, with some trains still slower.<sup>10</sup> In all parts of the country travelers were subject to frequent delays because

<sup>6</sup> *America during and after the War* (London: Longmans, Green, Reader, & Dyer, 1866), p. 17.

<sup>7</sup> A. C. Cole, p. 18.

<sup>8</sup> See the statistics given in *Hunt's Merchants' Magazine*, XXXVIII (1858), 240; XLII (1860), 253; and XLIV (1861), 249.

<sup>9</sup> Carl R. Fish, "The Northern Railroads, April, 1861," *American Historical Review*, XXII (1917), 789. The average rate of speed, including stops, of New York passenger trains was 20.51 m.p.h.; not including stops, 24.78 m.p.h. The average rate of speed of passenger expresses was 26.27 m.p.h., including stops, or 30.41 m.p.h., not including stops (*Hunt's Merchants' Magazine*, XL [1860], 499, from report of the state engineer, year ending September 30, 1859). See also the schedules in such guides as *Appleton's Illustrated Railway and Steam Navigation Guide* (New York: D. Appleton & Co.) and *Lloyd's Steamboat and Railroad Guide* (New York: W. Alvin Lloyd), for 1860.

<sup>10</sup> Olmsted's travels provide the best source of information on southern railroads.

they had to change trains, and, with as few trains a day as there were, missed connections were exasperating.<sup>11</sup>

Passenger fares were highly variable, although usually ranging between 2 and 3 cents a mile. Competition, by water or by another railroad, might drive fares down, especially during sporadic price wars,<sup>12</sup> while roads with a monopoly in their territory might charge rather more than 3 cents a mile. The rate schedules in the railroad guides indicate that most roads charged between 2 and 3 cents, while some branch lines charged between 3 and 4 cents; Southern railroads were more likely to have higher rates, sometimes as high as  $4\frac{1}{2}$  cents a mile.<sup>13</sup> Captain Galton, in his report to the (British) Board of Trade in 1857, put the first-class fare at 2 cents, second-class at 1 cent, and third-class at  $\frac{3}{4}$  of a cent.<sup>14</sup>

The one-class system was characteristic, but, as the Galton report indicates, it was not universal. Fares on the Albany and Boston-Western Railroad, in 1860, were  $2\frac{1}{2}$ –3 cents for first class and about  $2\frac{1}{4}$ – $2\frac{1}{2}$  cents a mile for second class. The Boston and

<sup>11</sup> There were seven trains daily each way between New York and Philadelphia, three each way between Pittsburgh and Philadelphia (advertisement in Freedley, *Leading Pursuits*, p. 522), but such schedules were unusual.

<sup>12</sup> Beste was carried from Buffalo to Sandusky by boat and from Sandusky to Cincinnati by rail, a total of 458 miles, for only \$3.00. This included a stateroom and meals on the boat and first-class accommodations on the railroad (Beste, I, 172).

In the absence of any public regulation the railroads charged high rates when they thought the public would pay them, and there were occasional rate agreements symptomatic of those which were to come later. In 1854 and again in 1858 the New York Central, the Erie, the Pennsylvania, and the Baltimore and Ohio agreed on fares from New York to common points in the West. They also agreed to eliminate the vigorous competition in the sale of tickets, though continuing to stress their own peculiar advantages—stopovers and connections, directness of route, and so on.

<sup>13</sup> Passenger rates in Massachusetts averaged 2.92 cents a mile in 1850, and 2.91 in 1854. The average would have been higher had it not been for the inclusion of "season passengers" carried at less than 1 cent a mile (William T. Davis (ed.), *The New England States* [Boston: D. H. Hurd & Co., 1897], IV, 1813). McMaster reported that in 1854 the rate of the Hudson River Railroad (which had steamboat competition) was 1 cent a mile, while the rate elsewhere in New York averaged 2.8 cents. In Connecticut the average fare was 2.62 cents, in Massachusetts 2.82 cents, and in Pennsylvania 3.31 cents, the average fare in Virginia was 4.28 cents a mile, and in Mississippi 4.58 cents (McMaster, VIII, 96).

<sup>14</sup> Cited by *Hunt's Merchants' Magazine*, XLI (1859), 120; see also Hancock, p. 138; and Robertson, p. 159.

Worcester also had different rates for different classes, and some roads had three classes.<sup>15</sup> A strictly American departure from the one-class system was the immigrant train, designed to carry newly arrived immigrants at the lowest possible rates by providing them with the absolute minimum in equipment and service. Such trains—on the New York Central, the Erie, the Michigan Central, the Terre Haute, Alton, and St. Louis, and probably other lines—sometimes used common boxcars, with rude seats fitted up; there were no windows, and the only fresh air came through the sliding doors at the side. Fare in such a train was about 1 cent a mile—half or less that of the regular trains.

At these rates the railroads found the passenger business increasing rapidly. In 1859 the passenger trains of Massachusetts carried 12,356,657 passengers a distance of about 190,000,000 passenger miles; and during the year ending September 30, 1860, the passenger trains of New York (excluding urban routes) traveled 9,905,691 miles, carrying 9,305,978 passengers a distance of 582,985,207 passenger miles. Pennsylvania railroads in that year carried 6,367,141 passengers.<sup>16</sup> The newer western lines, despite the low density of population in their territories, were doing a good business, too. In 1857 the total of the westward through and way traffic on the Michigan Central and Michigan Southern was 565,996 passengers, and the total of the eastward through and way traffic, 470,941.<sup>17</sup>

*Steamboats.*—During the fifties the railroad was becoming more important in passenger transportation than the steamboat, but the steamboat was not yet declining in absolute importance—more than a thousand steamboats were in use in 1860—nor had technical progress come to a halt. Among the recent im-

<sup>15</sup> *Directory of the Cities of Albany and Rensselaer*, 1860, p. 194; *Boston Directory*, 1860, p. 560; Meyer *et al.*, pp. 554–55.

<sup>16</sup> *Hunt's Merchants' Magazine*, XLII (1860), 504, and XLIV (1861), 370, 374. For additional figures on railway passenger traffic see *ibid.*, XXXIV (1856), 619, and XLIII (1860), 253; Ringwalt, p. 166; and George H. Thurston, *Pittsburgh As It Is* (reprinted as Vol. I, No. 1, of *Pittsburgh Quarterly Trade Circular*, October, 1857 [Pittsburgh: W. S. Haven, 1857]), pp. 13, 16.

<sup>17</sup> Pierce, II, 60 n., citing *Poor's Manual*, 1871–72.



provements was the screw propeller;<sup>18</sup> but more conspicuous was the increase in the size of the vessels, especially those built for the eastern rivers. The spirit of rivalry led to the construction of vessel after vessel built to surpass everything which had preceded it, in engine power, in speed, in size and magnificence of accommodations, and in freight capacity.

When the "New World" was finished for the Hudson River traffic in the fifties, it was the largest and fastest vessel in the world—three hundred and eight feet from stem to stern. Her hull was fifty feet wide, and the entire width over the wheels was eighty-five feet; the wheels were forty-five feet in diameter. The cabins were (for the time) of immense size, and few hotels could then accommodate as many travelers (it contained 347 state-rooms and 600 berths.) The cabins contained elegant parlors, sumptuously decorated with carved work and gilding, rich carpets, and costly furnishings. The dining-room was also large and well furnished. The boat attained a speed of 20 miles an hour.<sup>19</sup> In 1852 the average size of the steamboats then on the Lakes was 437 tons; of steamboats on the Ohio basin something over 306 tons; and of those on the lower and upper Mississippi, Arkansas, Missouri, and Illinois rivers nearly 274 tons. At that time there were on the Ohio and the Mississippi many steamboats of 300–500 tons each, and a number of from 600 to 800 tons; several lake steamers were 1,100 tons or over. After 1840, larger boats were introduced into service below Cincinnati and on the Mississippi between St. Louis and New Orleans. The "Eclipse" could make 16 miles an hour upstream, 25 miles an hour downstream. But there were many boats of small tonnage on the tributaries of the western rivers.<sup>20</sup>

In the early fifties the removal of snags and better steamboat inspection and conservative regulation made steamboating safer. Even so, during the first six months of 1859 there were 74

<sup>18</sup> W. H. Walker, "Screw Propulsion: Its Rise and Progress," *Atlantic Monthly*, V (1860), 314–29; Ringwalt, p. 137.

<sup>19</sup> Ringwalt, p. 137, citing Hall's census report on the shipbuilding industry.

<sup>20</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 139.

disasters and 325 lives lost on the Mississippi and its tributaries alone.<sup>21</sup> Steamboat racing, so characteristic of the period, was a dangerous sport when boilers were as easily exploded as they were then.

Despite the fact that the principal cities of the Northeast were connected by rail, steamboats continued to be a popular form of passenger travel. The railroad between New York and Boston appears to have been particularly uncomfortable, and it required a change of cars. The boat trip up the Hudson to Albany was popular because of the scenery along the way; and wherever there were direct connections by boat many travelers preferred the more comfortable and luxurious steamboats to the jolting railroad cars, often crowded and not infrequently dirty, which made their prosaic way through the countryside. Coast lines connected New York, Portland, Boston, and other New England points; and elsewhere in the Northeast there were numerous steamboat routes—excursion lines connecting New York and Philadelphia with river and coastal points, boats on Lake George and Lake Champlain, and others.<sup>22</sup>

The North and the South were connected by several steamboat lines. According to the *Boston Directory* there were steamboats from Boston to Charleston every ten days, to Baltimore every five days, to Norfolk, Petersburg, and Richmond every two weeks, and to Savannah twice a month.<sup>23</sup> Cabin passage between Boston and Charleston was \$18.00, and the \$20.00 fare from Boston to Savannah included passage, stateroom, and meals. There was a weekly boat from New York to Washington

<sup>21</sup> *Hunt's Merchants' Magazine*, XLI (1859), 225, citing the *Louisville Courier*.

<sup>22</sup> The steamboats on the important lines were large, fast, and luxurious. For descriptions of the Boston-New York boats see Hancock, pp. 128-32; Gratton, I, 23; Mackay, pp. 39-42; Pairpont, pp. 122, 127; Robertson, p. 159. For the Hudson River boats see Beste, I, 95-96 and 104-5; Bunn, p. 145; Burns, pp. 134-35; Nichols, II, 3-4; Weld, p. 363; and Patten, pp. 100-101.

The standard fare between New York City and Boston, either by boat or by train, was \$5.00; on the boat one could have a private stateroom for \$1.00 more and supper for 50 cents. During the frequent price wars the fare might get down to as low as \$1.50. The steamboat fare between New York and Albany fluctuated frequently, usually being between \$1.00 and \$1.50.

<sup>23</sup> *Boston Directory*, 1860, pp. 564-65.

and Monticello, with \$7.50 fare for passage, stateroom, and meals. Steamboats made three trips a week between New York and Norfolk and New York and Richmond, the fares, including stateroom, being \$8.00 and \$10.00, respectively (\$4.00 and \$5.00, steerage). New York was connected to Charleston by semi-weekly boats, at a fare of \$15.00 (cabin) or \$7.00 (steerage). Fare on the semi-weekly boat from New York to Savannah was also \$15.00. From New York to New Orleans was \$40.00, cabin, or \$25.00, steerage. Cabin passage from Philadelphia to Charleston was \$15.00, including meals; steerage was \$6.00.<sup>24</sup>

There were a number of steamboat companies operating on the Great Lakes in competition with the spreading railroad network.<sup>25</sup> Early in 1860 a line announced that two first-class steamboats would start running between Chicago and Lake Superior points as soon as navigation opened. Screw steamers of the Northern Transportation Company plied regularly between Ogdensburg, Cape Vincent, and the upper Lakes, with daily boats to Cleveland, Sandusky, Toledo, and Detroit, and weekly boats connecting Chicago, Milwaukee, and intermediate points. Fourteen steamers provided daily service over the Buffalo, Cleveland, and Chicago line. The Western Transportation Company and the Western Express Company offered daily steamboats from Buffalo to Chicago, Milwaukee, and Racine; to Detroit, Sandusky, and Toledo; to Erie and Cleveland; and to Green Bay.<sup>26</sup>

The South was even more dependent than the North on steamboats. Boats connected Baltimore, Portsmouth, Charleston, Savannah, Mobile, New Orleans, Houston, Galveston, and

<sup>24</sup> Advertisements in *Charleston Mercury*, November 6, 1860; *Boston Evening Transcript*, May 1, 1860; *Washington Daily National Intelligencer*, January 3, 1861; *Lloyd's Steamboat and Railway Guide*, 1860, p. 126; *Charleston Mercury*, November 6, 1860; *New York Daily Tribune*, July 2, 1860, and November 19, 1860; the *Philadelphia Press*, May 1, 1860; and the *Charleston Mercury*, November 6, 1860.

<sup>25</sup> See the description of the lake steamers in Isabella Bishop, pp. 168-70; Kohl, II, 113-15; Weld, pp. 183-85; and Beste, I, 153.

<sup>26</sup> Advertisements in *Chicago Daily Tribune*, January 16, 1860; March 16, 1860; May 1, 1860; and May 16, 1860.

other coast cities, while small, light-draught boats connected the back country with the coast. Many of these local boats were slow, dirty, and inconvenient, running on haphazard schedules and subject to multitudinous delays.

The steamboats which are the most remembered are those on the Mississippi and its tributaries, the Ohio and the Missouri. For these boats the decade preceding the Civil War was the golden age; the high tide ended just before the war as the railroads made great inroads on the boats' business. The Illinois Central in particular proved too strong a competitor for many boats on the Mississippi. In 1860 the 1,500-mile steamboat trip from Dubuque required six days; by railroad the distance was shortened to 893 miles and the time to two days. On the lower Mississippi there were hundreds of boats—there were about 4,000 arrivals at New Orleans in 1859–60<sup>27</sup>—many of them large and expensive, with luxurious furnishings and sumptuous tables.<sup>28</sup> In the late fifties cabin passage from New Orleans to St. Louis was about \$20.00, deck passage much lower.<sup>29</sup> On the upper Mississippi boats had to be of very small draught; but Davenport, in 1857, had 1,587 arrivals and St. Paul, 1,026 arrivals,<sup>30</sup> while tributaries, such as the Minnesota River, were carrying an important traffic. Excursion boats did a big business the length of the river.

Occupying a strategic position was St. Louis, with arrivals from the upper and lower Mississippi, the Ohio, and the Missouri and connected by regular packet lines to St. Joseph, Keokuk, Quincy, Jefferson City, Omaha, Council Bluffs, Sioux City,

<sup>27</sup> Garnett Laidlaw Eskew, *The Pageant of the Packets* (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1929), p. 133.

<sup>28</sup> For descriptions of the Mississippi steamboats see Everett Dick, *Vanguards of the Frontier* (New York: D. Appleton-Century Co., 1941), pp. 167–68; Herbert Eskew and Edward Quick, *Mississippi Steamboatin'* (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1926); William J. Peterson, *Steamboating on the Upper Mississippi* (Iowa City: State Historical Society, 1937); Charles Edward Russell, *A-Rafting on the Mississippi* (New York: Century Co., 1938), p. 25; *One Hundred Years' Progress*, p. 183. See also Mackie, pp. 172 ff.; Henry Murray, pp. 120–22; and Robertson, pp. 102–4.

<sup>29</sup> *De Bow's Review*, XXVI (1858), 601.

<sup>30</sup> *Hunt's Merchants' Magazine*, XXXIX (1858), 567. Minnesota, Commissioner of Statistics, *Minnesota: Its Progress and Capabilities* (2d annual rept., for the years 1860 and 1861 [St. Paul: William R. Marshall, 1862]), p. 88.

Cairo, Nashville, and other river towns. The more luxurious of the Ohio River boats compared favorably with those of the East. Regular lines, usually with three boats a week, connected Cincinnati and Louisville; Louisville, Evansville, Cairo, and Memphis; and Cincinnati and Mayville; while less frequently there were boats from Pittsburgh to New Orleans. Newspapers advertised 25 or 30 boats leaving Cincinnati during three-day periods, and during the year 1856-57 there were 2,703 arrivals at that city.<sup>31</sup> There was steamboating also on such Ohio tributaries as the Wabash and the Cumberland. The flow of population to the new lands west of the Mississippi had brought a sudden surge of traffic to the Missouri,<sup>32</sup> and some of its tributaries also carried a few steamboats.

Steamboats quickly appeared on the California waterways. In 1854 there were 2 regular steamers from San Francisco to Oregon, 4 to California points, and 23 river steamers.<sup>33</sup> In 1860 43 steam vessels were inspected at San Francisco.<sup>34</sup> A river boat took nine hours for the San Francisco-Sacramento run and charged \$5.00—staterooms \$3.00 extra.<sup>35</sup>

*Stagecoaches.*—The railroads of 1860 served only the large cities and such small towns as happened to lie on the trunk routes; there were no "feeder" lines. Only coast and lake cities and communities on navigable rivers could make use of steamboats. Stagecoaches, which could go anywhere there were roads, could pay expenses even where traffic was light, and could change their flexible schedules as occasion arose, undoubtedly were of an importance much greater than one would at first suspect.

The stagecoach in common use was the familiar Concord coach, which had taken its final form about 1830. The body was oval, flattened at the top to permit the carrying of baggage. Within were three cross-seats, each designed to hold three passengers; those on the front seat faced the rear, the others faced

<sup>31</sup> *Hunt's Merchants' Magazine*, XXXVII (1857), 759. For descriptions of the Ohio River boats see Bunn, p. 145; Beste, I, 248; Nichols, II, 4-6; Olmsted, *Texas Journey*, p. 5; and Foster, pp. 189-92.

<sup>32</sup> See Gladstone, pp. 153-64; and Quick, pp. 257-58.

<sup>34</sup> Ringwalt, p. 139.

<sup>33</sup> Soulé, Gihon, and Nisbet, p. 494.

<sup>35</sup> Sutherland, p. 77.

the front. The driver sat on an elevated seat in front of the covered body, while at the rear was a triangular, leather-covered "boot," where such baggage was carried as did not ride on top. The body of the coach was painted in some bright color, and the panels decorated with landscapes or portraits.<sup>36</sup>

Stagecoaching was least important in the Northeast, but even there anyone straying off the beaten path had to use the stage. The northern part of New England in particular provided business for coaches long after the Civil War. In the South there were still many stage routes; even where there were railroads, as in central Kentucky, the stagecoaches served as feeders and connecting links. In other states, such as Texas, where there were no railroads, the stagecoach provided the only method of reaching the interior. Travelers such as Parsons and Olmsted have described many coach journeys in the South, chiefly distinguished by the slow rate of progress, the endless fording of streams, the detours around old trees and through bogs. The southern stage lines were local affairs, which have left no history. Their offices were usually in tavern or hotel barrooms, and their frequent loss of baggage was notorious. But they were the only link with the outside world, and the stage driver was a man much admired by men and boys.

In the Old Northwest the stage remained, until the middle fifties, the only common carrier; but, as the railroads came in, the stage routes were pushed farther and farther west. Even in 1860 numerous western regions were still dependent upon stages; and the tavern, which was also the stage station, was the social hub of the village. Because of the roads and the weather, schedules could never be maintained. Coach travel was arduous at best, despite the relay stations every twelve or fifteen miles and the frequent taverns; at times such travel was an experience to be undergone only when grave emergency demanded it.<sup>37</sup>

<sup>36</sup> For descriptions of stagecoaches see Louis Pelzer, "Pioneer Stage-Coach Travel," *Mississippi Valley Historical Review*, XXIII (1936), 4-6; Quaife, pp. 154-56; and Ringwalt, p. 64; see also Burton, pp. 14-15; and C. B. Johnson, p. 49.

<sup>37</sup> For the inconveniences and dangers of coach travel see Quaife, pp. 162-65, and chap. xi; and Charles Casey, *Two Years on the Farm of Uncle Sam* (London: R. Bentley, 1852), *passim*.

West of the Mississippi there were Concord coaches, but except on mail routes the vehicles were more likely to be "jerkeys" or "mud wagons."<sup>38</sup>

In 1860, by traveling in stages during a large portion of each day and night, but halting forty-five times for intervals of from four to five or six hours, the journey was made from St. Joseph, Missouri, to Great Salt Lake, in nineteen days, the distance being 1,126 miles, and the average rate of speed nearly sixty miles a day.<sup>39</sup>

California, which in 1860 had only 70 miles of railroad and Oregon, which had only 4, were ideal territory for the stages. By 1860 stages were running (except for a twenty-one-mile stretch) from Sacramento to Portland, Oregon; practically all towns in California were knitted together by a network of passable roads, radiating from Sacramento, and stage lines. The California Stage Company had, in 1858, 28 daily stage lines in operation, requiring 1,000 horses, 134 Concord coaches, and 184 employees; the coaches traveled 1,970 miles of route, rolling up more than 1,000,000 stage-miles a year. Other companies had a total nearly as great.<sup>40</sup>

#### PUBLIC URBAN TRANSPORTATION

*Street railways.*—Local transportation has had very little to do with the broad pattern of economic development, but it impinges more often upon the daily life of city dwellers than does long-distance transportation. The steam railroad may be more important, as a distributor of goods, but the streetcar has more fares. Local transportation was characteristically different in the United States from what it was abroad. Where agencies could be devised to accommodate large numbers of passengers, as in street railways, omnibuses, and ferryboats, the service was rapid, frequent, and inexpensive. Where the element of personal service bulked large, as in hackney coaches, the charges were high, the facilities inconvenient, and the services rendered with scant courtesy or consideration.

<sup>38</sup> Cf. Ringwalt, p. 64.

<sup>39</sup> *Ibid.*, quoting John E. Reeside.

<sup>40</sup> William and George Hugh Banning, *Six Horses* (New York: Century Co., 1930), chap. iii; Oscar Osburn Winther, *Express and Stagecoach Days in California* (Stanford, Calif.: Leland Stanford University Press, 1936), pp. 151-59.

Typical of American ingenuity in the "mass production" of transportation services were the street railways, which had their beginnings in the fifties. By the end of the decade the Census could report more than 400 miles of street railway in Boston, New York City (including Brooklyn and Hoboken), Philadelphia, Cincinnati, and St. Louis. Cleveland, Chicago, Baltimore, and New Orleans had lines which were not included. There were also short stretches in a few other cities, while Syracuse, Buffalo, and Milwaukee had lines which commenced operations in 1860, and still other cities were planning railways which were in operation in the early sixties.

Boston had five street-railway systems with  $67\frac{1}{2}$  miles of routes. New York during the fifties built lines on all the avenues parallel to Broadway (Broadway itself and Fifth Avenue were excepted) and on many of the side streets. The five principal lines carried nearly 35,000,000 passengers in the year ending September 30, 1858, at fares of 5 cents for adults and 3 cents for children, maintaining average speeds of 5 or 6 miles an hour.<sup>41</sup> Philadelphia had no line until 1857; but the growth was rapid, and in 1858 the five lines in operation carried an estimated 46,000 passengers daily.<sup>42</sup> Chicago, which started building in 1858, had, by 1860, lines operating from Twenty-second Street north to North Avenue and as far west as Robey Street.<sup>43</sup> The lines in other cities were short and unimportant.

The cars were, of course, horsecars, with capacities of from twenty to thirty persons. Passengers could travel the full length of the line (in New York 7 or 8 miles) for a nickel—7 cents in Philadelphia—and the service seems to have been comparatively frequent. Then as now, however, there were many complaints of overcrowding.

<sup>41</sup> George Francis Train, *Observations on Street Railways* (2d ed.; London: Sampson Low, Son, & Co., 1860), pp. 11-13.

<sup>42</sup> Frederick W. Speirs, *The Street Railway System of Philadelphia: Its History and Present Condition* ("Johns Hopkins University Studies in Historical and Political Science," Ser. XV, Nos. III, IV, and V [Baltimore, 1897]), pp. 11-20.

<sup>43</sup> Esther Elizabeth Espenshade, "The Economic Development and History of Chicago, 1860-1865" (unpublished M.A. thesis, University of Chicago, Department of History, 1931), p. 9.



*Omnibuses.*—Service by omnibuses (horse-drawn conveyances, holding a dozen or so passengers, traveling along regularly established routes, and charging the same small fare for rides of any distance on the line) had been established in the larger cities twenty-five or thirty years before the Civil War. The introduction of street railways in some cities largely, but not entirely, displaced the omnibus in those cities; but, since only a few cities had such railways, there was still a large field for the omnibus. The omnibus was distinctly a one-man vehicle in its operation. The passenger would signal the driver when he wished to enter, and, having entered, he would pay his fare to the driver through a hole in the roof. When he wished to alight, the passenger pulled a cord, the vehicle stopped, a leather strap attached to the driver's leg released a catch on the door, and the passenger could open the door and step out.

In Boston there were omnibuses on six city routes and two suburban; in New York they were so far from extinction that Mackay described them as "swarming" on the streets,<sup>44</sup> and they were overcrowded at that. But in Philadelphia the street railway quickly forced the omnibus out of existence. In 1857 there were 322 omnibuses; in 1858 (the first full year of the street-railway lines) there were 222; in 1859 there were only 56; and by 1864 only 1 omnibus was left.<sup>45</sup> In Chicago there were omnibuses on three routes, with omnibuses every fifteen minutes on Randolph Street and every ten minutes on Clark Street.<sup>46</sup> There were omnibus lines also in Pittsburgh, Washington, Louisville, San Francisco, and probably numerous other cities. In some northern cities, including Boston and New York, the omnibuses were frequently put on runners after heavy snows.

*Hackney coaches.*—While travelers were agreed in their approval of the street railways and omnibuses, they were just as

<sup>44</sup> P. 19.

<sup>45</sup> Speirs, p. 11.

<sup>46</sup> Andreas, II, 118. In 1854, 22 miles of streets had been served by 18 buses on 8 routes, making a total of 408 trips daily; there were special buses from hotels to railroad stations and others running to the suburbs (Pierce, II, 323-24).

unanimous in their disapproval of the hansoms and hackneys. This disapproval was not limited to a few cities or a few drivers but included the whole country within its scope. It was not the cabs themselves that were disappointing—Bunn thought them superior to their English equivalents, Hancock found them neat and clean, and Trollope “clean, roomy, and nice”<sup>47</sup>—but the conduct of the drivers and the high fares charged.

Baxter’s comment is typical: “The cabs in the United States are as handsome and showy as gentlemen’s carriages, generally mounted with silver, and always exceedingly expensive. The price demanded, and even allowed by law, is in most cases so exorbitant that I seldom employed them.” Bunn made an exception of Boston, where the fares were more reasonable. No one made an exception of New York. According to Hancock the hackney carriages were few and little used because of the high fares and because of the independence of the drivers. Bunn wrote that, in spite of the legal maximum being 50 cents, in actual practice the drivers never charged less than \$1.00. Mackay was charged \$2.00 for a drive of less than two miles; he wrote that hackney coaches were such an expensive luxury that few but newcomers to the city ever thought of using one, and “the hackney coaches with two horses are conducted upon such a system that one job per diem may be considered tolerably good pay.” Trollope found \$1.00 an hour the regular charge for public carriages; going out to dinner and back cost \$2.00 in carriage fares. On Sala’s first day in New York he had to pay \$5.00 for a five-mile drive, and his hack driver further imposed on him by taking in other passengers as they went along.<sup>48</sup>

It was not only in the metropolitan cities of the Northeast that these conditions existed. In Chicago, despite a legal maximum hack fare of 50 cents for up to a mile, extortion continued. In Washington the public conveyances were poor and the fares

<sup>47</sup> Bunn, p. 143; Hancock, p. 39; Trollope, p. 194.

<sup>48</sup> Baxter, p. 25; Bunn, p. 143; Hancock, p. 39; Mackay, p. 19; Trollope, p. 194; Sala, I, 67–69. Similar comments by other visitors from abroad were those of Dicey (p. 19), Henry Murray (p. 25), and H. Reid (pp. 229–30).

In 1860 the legal carriage fare in Boston was 30 and 37½ cents for anywhere within the city; in New York 50 cents for a mile or less, 75 cents for two miles.

extortionate. Weld found that the driver of the coach taking a dozen passengers from the boat to the hotel in Baltimore charged them \$1.00 each. Mackay had to pay \$1.00 hack fare for traveling less than a mile in New Orleans, and Nichols tells of a driver there charging \$25.00 for taking a load of passengers a few rods; he also speaks of high fares in Memphis.<sup>49</sup>

*Ferryboats.*—There were about 20 ferry lines in New York City, with fares of 1 cent to Brooklyn, 3 cents to New Jersey, and 6½ cents to Staten Island. The Brooklyn ferry left every two or three minutes, most of the others every five or ten minutes. Other cities cut by rivers also had ferries, though it is difficult to find references to them.

#### PERSONALLY OWNED CONVEYANCES

*The horse and buggy.*—It is easy to attach too much importance to the omnibuses and street railways. Few cities were so large as to make it inconvenient for people to walk to their destinations. The well-to-do had their carriages, while others patronized the livery stable.<sup>50</sup> In the back country the travel between towns, between farms, and between town and farm was almost entirely dependent upon the saddle horse, the buggy, or the wagon (in rare instances the rowboat) of the traveler himself. It is impossible to make any sort of estimate as to the numbers of such vehicles in use in the fifties and sixties.

Up to about 1840 it had seemed impossible that anything could ever displace the two-wheeled chaise from popularity. Then a purely American vehicle, the four-wheeled buggy, appeared in a multitude of forms and opened the way for novelty.<sup>51</sup> The elliptical spring had been invented in 1825 and was used in

<sup>49</sup> Pierce, II, 323; Delos F. Wilcox, *Great Cities in America* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1910), p. 25; Henry Murray, pp. 195-96; Weld, p. 333; Mackay, p. 179; Nichols, I, 286.

<sup>50</sup> In the fifties it was an exceedingly small or remote village that was without a livery stable; big cities had them by the hundreds. They have, however, largely escaped the notice of local historians, visiting Europeans, and others; and I can add little or nothing in the way of quantitative information. In Chicago a coach or carriage, drawn by two horses, cost, with a driver, \$5.00 a day; a cab with a single horse \$3.00 (Pierce, II, 323).

<sup>51</sup> Chauncey Thomas, "American Carriage and Wagon Works," *One Hundred Years of American Commerce*, II, 518.

carriage-building after 1830, and there were other improvements in design and construction and new methods of building which reduced cost. The rubber tire had not yet come into use. During the forties and fifties the manufacture and sale of carriages increased, owing to improved roads and to the growing wealth than to any improvements in the vehicles themselves.<sup>52</sup>

In the city the characteristic vehicle was the "buggy," much lighter in weight than its European counterpart; there were no longer any two-wheeled vehicles to be seen.<sup>53</sup> Mrs. Bishop thought the private carriages roomy and comfortable but hardly elegant. They were closed carriages, for the most part, with glass sides and front. She was surprised at the number of two-horse carriages, most of them covered, in Cincinnati.<sup>54</sup> Nevertheless, comparatively few persons owned their own carriages in the fifties. It is said that there were so few private carriages in New York City that one person knew them all by sight.<sup>55</sup>

The wealthy planter dressed his coachmen in livery and was proud of his handsome carriage and fine saddles. Frederick Douglass wrote that his Maryland master had three coaches and gigs, phaetons, barouches, sulkies, and sleighs, besides saddles and harness. He had, by Douglass' account, thirty-five pleasure horses and needed two stablemen.<sup>56</sup> The North Carolina planter was likely to have a sulky, buggies, and a light wagon, imported from New England.<sup>57</sup> Van Buren noticed the carriages drawing up at a church in Mississippi: they were silver-plated and burnished, and had Negro drivers in livery.<sup>58</sup> In marked contrast were the carts to be seen making up the greater part of the traffic on the country roads of Georgia. To Olmsted these little one-horse carts, the driver astride the horse, looked as if they had been made with axes and jackknives. Little metal

<sup>52</sup> Bolles, p. 557.

<sup>53</sup> Burns, pp. 143-44.

<sup>54</sup> Isabella Bishop, pp. 118-19, 357.

<sup>55</sup> Arthur Train, *Puritan's Progress* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1931), p. 239. None of the coachmen wore livery, the first in New York City being introduced by Pierre Lorillard, Sr., in 1866.

<sup>56</sup> P. 110.

<sup>57</sup> Avirett, p. 51.

<sup>58</sup> P. 102.

was used in their construction, and the harness was improvised from rope and bits of leather.<sup>59</sup>

In rural regions of the West travel, even for short distances, was usually by horseback, the women always riding sidesaddle; until the last part of the fifties there were few buggies in Illinois. Farmers and their families attended political rallies or went to town for court week in big stout wagons.<sup>60</sup> The most common conveyance was a two-horse wagon, with chairs from the house placed in the wagon bed.<sup>61</sup>

In the northern winters it was often necessary, as well as good fun, to substitute a sleigh for the buggy or runners for wheels. In city and in country, for business and for pleasure, sleighs and sledges were used.

#### STREETS AND ROADS

*Streets and sidewalks.*—If the caustic comments of our usual informants—the European travelers who came to the United States in the fifties and early sixties—are a safe guide, American streets were poorly paved, obstructed, filthy and unsanitary, and overrun with animal scavengers. Baxter's comment is typical of more than a score which might be cited:

With few exceptions, American streets are wretchedly ill-paved and intolerably filthy, so badly lighted that it is dangerous to go out after dark, and so full of holes, that European carriages would not be safe for a week. I have seen ladies over the ankle-step in mud-ruts two feet deep, and chasms large enough to overturn an omnibus. Even in cities, the inhabitants of which pay heavy taxes for paving and cleansing, these departments are very ill-conducted, and the state of many back and cross streets baffles description. . . . Wholesale dealers, too, are permitted to place their bales and boxes of merchandize on the pavements before their stores, so that one scrambles rather than walks in the business parts of the cities.<sup>62</sup>

Even in New England the streets showed need for improvement: Mrs. Cowell found the streets the most strikingly unfavorable thing about Boston, Providence, and Worcester,

<sup>59</sup> *Seaboard Slave States*, p. 413.

<sup>60</sup> Beveridge, II, 198. West of the Mississippi, too, "many had their own horses and saddles or carriages" (Dick, *Sod House Frontier*, p. 70.)

<sup>61</sup> C. B. Johnson, pp. 138-39.

<sup>62</sup> Pp. 24-25.

though Chambers was pleased by Boston's granite sidewalks.<sup>63</sup> New York's streets, like those of most American streets, were laid out at right angles. The increasingly heavy traffic was making the choice of paving materials a serious problem. There were about 175 miles of paved streets, it was reported in 1859, a large proportion of which would cost more to repair than to replace. The Belgian pavement could not stand up under the heavy traffic, and no new cobblestones were being laid.<sup>64</sup> The stone in the paved streets crumbled and broke apart, leaving holes which collected filth and refuse. Boxes and barrels of ashes and garbage stood in the streets, and refuse of all sorts was cheerfully disposed of there. And even in New York there were goats, geese and chickens, sheep, and pigs wandering in some of the streets.<sup>65</sup> But the leading complaint—the truth of which was never questioned—was that the streets were filthy: some were almost impassable because of mud and pools of water, and in some streets the accumulations were so great that the fire engines could hardly get through. In Philadelphia things were better—by 1857 there were 350 miles of cobblestone paving and 500 miles of sidewalks,<sup>66</sup> and visitors found the city cleaner than the others. In Chicago only a few dozen miles were paved—with planks, macadam, and cobblestones—of the 400 miles of city streets; the rest, in rainy weather, were seas of mud and in any weather full of refuse.

Some of the smaller cities of the North had a little paving, many had none at all.<sup>67</sup> In none of them were the streets kept clean; and, in almost all, hogs, dogs, and rats, and sometimes other animals found the streets a paradise. Most of the cities of any size had their more important streets gaslighted, but the lighting failed to measure up to the needs.

Washington's streets were, except for Pennsylvania Avenue,

<sup>63</sup> Disher, p. 11; Chambers, p. 211.

<sup>64</sup> New York City, Croton Aqueduct Department, *Annual Report, January 3, 1859* (New York: Charles W. Baker, 1859), pp. 19–20.

<sup>65</sup> Sala, I, 412–13; Chambers, pp. 192–93.

<sup>66</sup> Freedley, *Philadelphia* (1858 ed.), p. 63.

<sup>67</sup> Cincinnati was laying "bowlder" pavement in the fifties (Cist, p. 338).

all unpaved; in the winter they were muddy wallows for hogs, in the summer dusty. There was not even any grading, and the ruts threatened the very existence of carriages. Throughout the South there seems to have been but little paving, though the most important streets in a few big cities might be graveled. They were poorly drained, poorly graded, obstructed, and filthy. In many towns buzzards lived on the garbage thrown into the streets. There were a few planked streets in Sacramento, but elsewhere in the Far West—Denver, Salt Lake City, San Francisco, Los Angeles—the streets were unpaved and uncared for.

*Roads and highways.*—Plank roads, in some states designed as feeders for the railroads, aroused a good deal of enthusiasm in the late forties and early fifties. New York was one of the leaders (in 1852 the state had 2,106 miles of plank roads),<sup>68</sup> and Pennsylvania, Wisconsin, Illinois, and Indiana all saw a good deal of plank-road construction. Plank roads were easily built. Two rows of oak stringers, about two inches square in cross-section, were sunk into the right of way, their tops flush with the ground, and across them were laid planks, two and a half or three inches by eight feet long. The planks were not fastened to the stringers, whose only function was to keep the planks from turning in the mud when heavy loads passed across them. Such roads appeared cheap, and the expectation was that they would last a long time. It quickly became evident, however, that the roadbeds could not be kept free of air and water, and decay set in. Before many years the roads were a source of discomfort and danger, and they were allowed to go to pieces without replacement.

Before the enthusiasm for them waned, plank roads radiated from numerous cities from New York State westward—Dayton, Chicago, Detroit, Milwaukee. Chicago's experience was typical. Roads could be built for \$2,000 dollars a mile; and, though the maximum tolls were prescribed by law, they appeared sure money-makers. Beginning in 1848 roads were built radiating in all directions; after about five years, when 50 miles or more had been built, the profits proved illusory, and all projects were

<sup>68</sup> *Hunt's Merchants' Magazine*, XXVII (1852), 508.

abandoned.<sup>69</sup> Similar roads were built in many parts of the country—in Maine, Kentucky, Missouri, and California. Their history was the same wherever they were built.

The curiously episodic manner of the historians of transportation (the fifties were part of the "railway period," so all other forms of transportation are ignored) makes them useless as sources; I suspect, however, that little real progress in road maintenance had been made since the early years of the century. There was the Cumberland Road, much of it in fairly good repair. In some parts of the country, where there was a large volume of traffic, turnpike companies or local authorities saw to the building and maintenance of macadam roads. Such "improved" roads were few; and everywhere in the South and West—and for that matter in most places in the Northeast—the roads were as bad as they could be and still be roads. Much of the work was done by farmers "working out" their taxes; there seems to have been little supervision and little actual cash expenditure. Such roads were tolerable in late spring and in early autumn and in the North when covered with snow for sleds. In summer they were inches deep in dust and in rainy seasons little more than sloughs of mud—long stretches became quagmires, and occasional mudholes were so deep that wheels would sink and even horses flounder. Sometimes it required two horses to pull a single buggy, and frequently travelers preferred the open fields to the road.

*Bridges.*—John A. Roebling in 1844 built a wire suspension aqueduct over the Allegheny River at Pittsburgh and followed it with other bridges and aqueducts. In 1852 he began the bridge over the Niagara River, of which the lower floor was opened in 1854, the upper open for trains in 1855. In 1856 Roebling began the Covington and Cincinnati suspension bridge over the Ohio, finished in 1867 at a cost of \$1,500,000. In 1858–60 a wire suspension bridge was built over the Allegheny at Pittsburgh.<sup>70</sup> I have no very clear notion as to how many bridges there were in the cities. Broad rivers still had to be

<sup>69</sup> See Quaife, pp. 130–37.

<sup>70</sup> J. L. Bishop, II, 578–79.



spanned by ferries, and even where the rivers were more easily bridged I suspect civic indifference kept the number of bridges at a minimum.<sup>71</sup>

Outside the cities there were almost no bridges over the large rivers, and travelers had to ford the streams where there were no ferries. In the South and West bridges were even more infrequently encountered. A drawbridge at Topeka, built in 1858 for \$15,000, was the only bridge over the Kansas River.<sup>72</sup> Greeley wrote that there were few ferries in Kansas and that bridges were almost unknown. In the vicinity of Denver there was a footbridge over the Platte and another over Clear Creek. A toll bridge at Laramie was charging \$2.50 toll. All the rivers around San Francisco were crossed by toll bridges or ferries, at \$1.00 a wagon.<sup>73</sup>

#### THE POSTAL SYSTEM

*Mail transportation.*—Methods of handling mail were being continually changed during the middle years of the nineteenth century. The sulky and the stagecoach were being pushed farther and farther west as the Frontier receded, the steamboat was failing to hold its own, and the railroad was coming to dominate the carriage of mail. While the new transportation agencies were reducing the time required for delivery, public opinion was forcing lower and more nearly uniform postage rates.

In 1860 horse and sulky routes still accounted for 60 per cent of all post-route mileage, giving to the sparsely settled regions contacts with trade, manufacturing, and government. Stagecoach mail routes were only about a third as extensive and were steadily declining in importance. There were about 15,000 miles of steamboat-route mileage (compared with 140,000 miles for horse and sulky, 55,000 for stagecoaches), and it was being cur-

<sup>71</sup> The flood of March, 1849, destroyed Chicago's bridges; and the next year ferries cost the city nearly \$3,400. Throughout the fifties and sixties there was agitation for more bridges, but the late sixties found such accommodations sadly inadequate (Pierce, II, 321).

<sup>72</sup> *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, VII (December 25, 1858), 47.

<sup>73</sup> *Overland Journey*, pp. 34, 161, 181, and 298.

tailed still further. Railway mail service, on the other hand, had been steadily expanding and by 1860 accounted for 37 per cent of all route mileage and a much larger percentage of all mail carried.<sup>74</sup>

*Use of the postal system.*—An approach toward uniformity of rates was made by the act of March 3, 1851, which set a 3-cent rate for prepaid letters and a 5-cent rate for those not prepaid. These rates applied only to letters sent distances less than 3,000 miles; the rates to greater distances within the nation were fixed at 6 and 12 cents, for which a 10-cent rate was substituted in 1855, when prepayment of all domestic postage was also required. Meanwhile, in 1852, stamped envelopes had come into use for the mutual convenience of the postal authorities and of letter-writers. Newspapers and magazines paid 3 cents an ounce, with lower rates within the state of publication, and weekly papers were carried free within the state.<sup>75</sup>

The lack of statistical information as to the number of pieces mailed makes it necessary to rely upon indirect methods of comparison. Between 1860 and 1930 the per capita postal receipts in this country increased from 26 cents to \$5.57.<sup>76</sup> The comparison is not an exact one—since 1860 postage rates have been lowered still further and made still more nearly uniform and it is probable that the proportion of first-class mail to other classes has changed materially—but an increase of more than twenty times is too great to leave any doubt as to its significance.

*The mail service.*—The much-needed overhauling of the delivery system had not been made by 1860; and it seemed obvious to many, as it did to Trollope,<sup>77</sup> that there was something wrong in a system under which private enterprisers could make money in delivering letters, businessmen rented post-office boxes in-

<sup>74</sup> Ross Allan McReynolds, "History of the United States Post Office, 1607-1931" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, University of Chicago, Department of Economics, 1935), pp. 71 ff.

<sup>75</sup> McReynolds, pp. 178-201.

<sup>76</sup> McReynolds, p. 508. Postal correspondence in the United States was estimated to be between 160,000,000 and 170,000,000 letters in 1861 (*Hunt's Merchants' Magazine*, XLVI [1862], 329). This would have been 5 or 6 letters per capita.

<sup>77</sup> In his chapter (chap. xxxiii) on the United States postal system.

stead of having their mail delivered, and persons living outside the cities had no delivery at all. In New York and other big cities the postal system charged for its deliveries (2 cents a letter in New York, 1 cent in Boston) and had to compete against private delivery services. In rural districts and towns there were no deliveries, but the necessity of having to call at the post office—the village store—did not seem a hardship to many, nor did daily deliveries seem necessary.<sup>78</sup>

Attempts were made, during the period from 1854 to 1860, to inaugurate a satisfactory system for registering mail, but the attempts were unsuccessful; the registration served to give the sender a receipt, but no guaranty of delivery was assumed. Money orders were not introduced until 1864, special delivery until 1885, a parcel post until 1912 (the "third-class" mail of 1863 did include some sorts of packages), or postal savings until 1922.

*Summary.*—It is evident that local conditions determined the amount of service rendered by the postal system. In the big cities of the East and in other towns on trunk-line railroads there were daily mails. Elsewhere the mails were dependent upon the other means of transportation and might not arrive oftener than once a week, or even once a month. Anna Howard Shaw later remembered that on the Michigan frontier, in 1859 and 1860, mail was delivered once a month by a carrier who alternately rode horseback and paddled a canoe.<sup>79</sup> During the winter many communities in the Northwest were dependent upon deliveries by sleighs and sleds.

*The overland mail.*—The first United States mail service to Colorado, without transfer to private companies, was in August, 1860. These mails were weekly, the stage route including Julesburg, Denver, Central City, Boulder, Colorado City, and Breckenridge.<sup>80</sup> During 1857 and 1858 mail service to the Far West

<sup>78</sup> The delivery systems are described in McReynolds, pp. 132-36. Free urban delivery was begun in 1863, rural free delivery not until 1902.

<sup>79</sup> Pp. 33-34.

<sup>80</sup> Leroy R. Hafen, "Early Mail Service to Colorado, 1858-1860," *Colorado Magazine*, II (1925), 23-32.

had been expanded to include twice-monthly service by way of New Orleans and Panama; twice monthly by way of New Orleans and Tehuantepec; twice monthly by way of San Antonio, El Paso, and Yuma; twice weekly by way of St. Louis and Memphis, El Paso and Stockton; once a month from Kansas City to Stockton; and once a week from St. Joseph through Salt Lake City to Placerville. There was considerable retrenchment in 1859, the Kansas City-Stockton and the Tehuantepec routes being discontinued and service reduced on the others. Not until 1861 did the Far West receive a daily mail.<sup>81</sup> Once arrived in California, the mail was distributed by stage or the local expresses.

None of these mail services has taken quite such a place in the popular imagination as the pony express. This was a semi-weekly service, lasting from April 3, 1860, to October, 1861, at first from St. Joseph to Sacramento, cutting the delivery time between the coasts to about ten days. It was really a continuation of the telegraph system (the rate was \$5.00 for a half-ounce letter, later reduced to \$2.00, and finally to \$1.00), and, when the telegraph to the Pacific was completed, the pony express was no longer needed.<sup>82</sup>

#### THE TELEGRAPH SYSTEM

*Expansion and consolidation.*—In considering the consumption habits of the ante bellum period we need say little about the telegraph, for only in the gravest of emergencies was it used for personal matters. The services were available, but their general use had to wait upon lower rates, larger incomes, and a change in the public attitude.

By 1860 the expanding telegraph network included all the

<sup>81</sup> For the overland mail see Banning, Parts II and III; McReynolds, pp. 91-101; Glenn D. Bradley, *The Story of the Pony Express* (2d ed.; Chicago: A. C. McClurg & Co., 1914), *passim*; Leroy R. Hafen, *The Overland Mail, 1849-1869* (Cleveland: Arthur H. Clark Co., 1926), *passim*.

<sup>82</sup> There is no lack of material, both popular and scholarly, on the pony express—see e.g., Bradley; Chapman; Hafen, *Overland Mail*, chap. viii; Frank A. Root and William Elsey Connelley, *The Overland Stage to California* (Topeka, 1901); William Lightfoot Visscher, *The Pony Express* (Chicago: Rand, McNally & Co., 1908); as well as such books as Dick's *Vanguards of the Frontier*.

principal cities of the country except those of the Far West (the line to the Pacific was completed in 1861), rates had been reduced, and the telegraph had become—for matters of urgent business—an accepted means of communication. Telegraph poles were contributing to the ugliness of cities. Beginning in the middle fifties, the tendency had been toward consolidation of the lines into a very few companies, each with an impressive network—the American Telegraph Company, the Magnetic Telegraph Company, the rapidly growing Western Union, the Southwestern Telegraph Company, and others. In 1858 there were more than 35,000 miles of telegraph lines in the United States, and by 1860 at least 50,000 miles, with more than 1,400 stations, 10,000 operators, and over 5,000,000 messages annually. In the early fifties a ten-word message from New York to Boston cost 20 cents, New York to Philadelphia 25 cents, to Chicago \$1.00, to New Orleans \$2.40, and to Washington 50 cents.<sup>83</sup>

#### THE CARRIAGE OF PARCELS

*The express companies.*—In the absence of any parcel post the transportation and delivery of packages was a purely private enterprise. By the time of the Civil War there were large express companies with far-flung organizations, but—in contrast with the telegraph business—the small enterprise continued to be an important factor. Many of these were hardly more than messenger services or “coat-pocket express companies”; the *Boston Almanac*, in 1860, listed about 300 expresses in that city alone.<sup>84</sup> Compared with the 3 or 4 big railway express companies, these were obviously of trivial importance.

<sup>83</sup> Charles Frederick Briggs and August Maverick, *The Story of the Telegraph* (New York: Rudd & Carleton, 1858), p. 27; George B. Prescott, *History, Theory, and Practice of the Electric Telegraph* (Boston: Ticknor & Fields, 1860), p. 214; Alexander Jones, *Historical Sketch of the Electric Telegraph: Including Its Rise and Progress in the United States* (New York: George B. Putnam, 1852), pp. 189–94. See also James D. Reid, *The Telegraph in America* (New York: Derby Bros., 1879); and Alvin F. Harlow, *Old Wires and New Waves* (New York: D. Appleton-Century Co., 1936).

<sup>84</sup> Pp. 234–37. For the histories of the small companies and of the early consolidations see A. L. Stimson, *History of the Express Companies* (New York: The author, 1859).

These larger express companies had rather close relationships with the railroad systems; the American Express used the New York Central lines, Adams those of the Pennsylvania and the Baltimore and Ohio, and the United States Express those of the Erie.<sup>85</sup> The American Express Company was the result of the merger in 1850 of Wasson and Company, Wells and Company, and Livingston, Fargo, and Company. Still using the old names "Livingston, Fargo, and Company" and "Wells, Butterfield, and Company," it did business from New York westward through the states of the Old Northwest and even as far as Kansas and Minnesota; it had some routes into lower Canada. Another express company with a large business in the western states was the United States Express Company, organized in 1854 and for a time operated directly by the Erie; by 1858 the affiliation had proved to be a failure, and the express company was independent.

The Adams and Company's Express was the result of a consolidation in 1854 of Adams' old organization with Thompson, Livingston, and Company, Kinsley and Company, Hoey and Company's Charleston Expresses, and Harnden's Steamship Express. By the outbreak of the war Adams had virtually the entire express business of the South and Southwest and was extending its business in the Atlantic states as far north as southern New England, thus including "the most densely populated and industrially the best developed section of the Union."<sup>86</sup> These three companies were much the largest, though a fourth—the National Express Company (incorporated in 1855)—seems to have done most of the express business between New York and the chief towns of lower Canada. I have found little to indicate what charges any of these companies made or what

<sup>85</sup> For the early history of the major companies see Alvin F. Harlow, *Old Waybills* (New York: D. Appleton-Century Co., 1934), esp. pp. 65-67; and Henry Wells, *Sketch of the Rise, Progress, and Present Condition of the Express System* (Albany: Van Benthuysen's Steam Printing House, 1864); see also Levi C. Weir, "The Express," *One Hundred Years of American Commerce*, I, 137-40.

<sup>86</sup> Harlow, *Old Waybills*, p. 67.

service they gave, though there seems to have been some room for complaint.<sup>87</sup>

By 1860 Wells, Fargo had practically a monopoly of the express business to the Far West. Wells, Fargo, and Company's California Express was organized in 1852 to compete against Adams' monopoly; and, after the failure in 1855 of the Adams California affiliate, Wells, Fargo had almost the whole business and was the only concern to make important treasure shipments. It received in California twice as many packages from outside the state as the Pacific Express and Freeman and Company combined and had permanent agencies in nearly every city and town in California—147 by 1860. As new mining regions were opened, it extended its services into Oregon, Nevada, and Colorado.<sup>88</sup>

<sup>87</sup> Trollope wrote (p. 308): "A parcel sent by express over a distance of forty miles will not be delivered within twenty-four hours. I once made my plaint on this subject at the bar or office of an hotel, and was told that no remonstrance was of avail. 'It is a monopoly,' the man told me, 'and if we say anything, we are told that if we do not like it we need not use it.'"

<sup>88</sup> Wells, pp. 15-16; Winther, pp. 141-42.

## CHAPTER X

### GOVERNMENTAL AND PHILANTHROPIC CONTRIBUTIONS

#### THE STATE AND ECONOMIC LIFE

*Public expenditures.*—Although the chapter heading suggests several fruitful lines of thought, it is my purpose only to fill in a few gaps remaining in the other chapters; to go further would lead me outside the already broad limits I have set myself. In the main each family's level of living in 1860 was the sum of the goods and services it purchased for itself. There were a few exceptions to this, a few additions to these purchases, some of which were provided by governmental bodies out of public revenues and others of which were the contributions of private philanthropy. It is with these additions that the present chapter deals.

The first approach that suggests itself is the purely statistical: How large were public expenditures in 1860? For what were they made? How do they compare with the public expenditures of earlier and of later periods?

It is difficult to secure uniform and reliable reports on the expenditures of all the governmental units even today; to secure data of a similar sort for 1860 is next to impossible. The differences in government spending in these two periods are of such a magnitude, however, that even relatively large errors in the estimates will not vitiate the conclusions. Total expenditures of the federal government, in the fiscal year 1860, exclusive of public debt retirements, amounted to \$72,411,658, or \$3.74 per capita.<sup>1</sup> Federal expenditures during the year ending June 30, 1933, exclusive of public debt retirements, trust funds, expenditures for the District of Columbia, refunds of customs and in-

<sup>1</sup> U.S. Treasury Department, *Annual Report of the Secretary of the Treasury on the State of the Finances for the Fiscal Year Ended June 30, 1931* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1932), pp. 454-61.



ternal revenue, and other nongovernmental costs, were \$3,906,600,000, or \$31.20 per capita.<sup>2</sup> Similar figures for later years would, of course, be much higher. Even more marked than the increase in federal expenditures has been that in state and local expenditures, as shown in Table 8. The per capita expenditures of the city of Boston in 1860 were about \$20.00. New York City spent for public purposes in 1860, including interest on debt, \$10.52—six times as much as its per capita expenditures in 1790, though only one-eighteenth what they were in 1935.<sup>3</sup>

TABLE 8\*  
EXPENDITURES OF STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENTS  
1860 AND 1932

UNIT OF GOVERNMENT	1860		1932	
	Total	Per Capita	Total	Per Capita
States.....	\$24,500,891	\$0.78	\$2,505,835,000	\$20.24
Counties.....	19,212,224	.61	1,411,826,000	12.88
Cities, towns.....	24,885,983	.79	3,594,640,000	45.32
Other local†.....	25,066,991	0.80	2,050,307,000	.....

\* Figures for 1932 are the "governmental-cost payments" as given in U.S. Bureau of the Census. *Financial Statistics of State and Local Governments, 1932* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1935) Table 3. Figures for 1860 are from the *Eighth Census: Mortality and Miscellaneous*, p. 511, and are probably far from complete (they do include \$3,248,714 in taxes paid in labor).

† For 1932 this includes school districts, townships, bridge, dike, drainage, irrigation, road, and other districts; for 1860 it includes school, poor, road, and miscellaneous taxes.

According to a recent estimate, "in 1860 the average family of five paid less than twenty-four dollars taxation, but by 1930 this amount had grown to approximately four hundred and twenty dollars."<sup>4</sup> The bulk of the increase has been for the cost of war (including war-debt financing, pensions, and other related expenditures), for the greatly increased cost of schools on all levels,<sup>5</sup> for public roads, and for the various activities of city

<sup>2</sup> U.S. *Statistical Abstract, 1935*, p. 204, Table 207.

<sup>3</sup> Chester W. Wright, *Economic History of the United States* (New York: McGraw-Hill Book Co., 1941), p. 1034.

<sup>4</sup> Carle C. Zimmerman and Merle E. Frampton, *The Family and Society* (New York: D. Van Nostrand Co., 1935), p. 21.

<sup>5</sup> In 1860 the total cost of schools on all levels, including both public and private expenditures, was only \$1.26 per free white person (*Eighth Census: Mortality and Miscellaneous*, p. 503).

governments. One competent student of public expenditures gives special emphasis to increased expenditures for the regulation of business, agriculture, and labor; for anti-trust measures, pure-food-law enforcement, and similar protective measures; for the Federal Trade Commission and Interstate Commerce Commission; for state commissions of various kinds; for local licensing and inspection; for public health, including inspection and information, and free clinics; for free legal service; for community centers, playgrounds, and beaches; for care of delinquents and defectives; and to expenditures attributable to inefficiency and graft in administration.<sup>6</sup>

How are we to relate these expenditures to the level of living? Strict construction of the Constitution had prevented the federal government from providing any goods or services which private enterprise might be expected to produce. The expenditures on the armed forces seem to have been regarded as adequate; and to introduce the question of whether additional expenditures for military purposes would have "raised" the level of living is futile. The same may be said for the cost of maintaining the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of government and, indeed, for almost all federal expenditures in 1860. The government had withdrawn from highway construction, and the postal system was supposed to be self-supporting. The state governments, again, had not expanded their activities to provide goods and services for the consumer. The increases in their expenditures can be accounted for by the increased administrative costs resulting from the growth in population and in business activity—in particular by the increase in volume of state regulation of business.

The great increase in public expenditures to 1860 was local, and here at least part of the increase was occasioned by a greater provision of goods and services than in an earlier period. It is true that municipalities, too, were expanding their regulatory functions—I have already called attention to the inspection of food and markets, for instance. But the growth of cities brought with it new problems. The old voluntary fire and police depart-

<sup>6</sup> Harold W. Guest, *Public Expenditures* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1927).

ments were totally inadequate. A municipal water supply was essential to a crowded population, and sewers had to be provided. Greater distances and heavier traffic called for better streets and sidewalks, bridges, and (in other local divisions) roads. Meanwhile the sordid condition of the poor seemed to call for action, and the growing prosperity of the rest of the population could be utilized to provide more for the poor. Humanitarian and democratic impulses led not only to direct poor relief, but to public schools, libraries, parks, and museums.

Some of these contributions to the level of living I have already touched upon—water supply, sewerage, refuse removal, public health, roads and streets, and others. In the following chapters I shall have more to say about schools and libraries, parks and museums. There remain certain unrelated contributions which I shall speak of here. The more important of these are police and fire departments and public poor relief.

Before passing to these topics I want to revert once more to the relation of government expenditures to the level of living and to the contrast between such expenditures in the 1850's and the 1930's. It is important to see that these increased public expenditures do not, for the most part, represent transfers from private to public business. They are expenditures for goods and services which are not, and typically cannot, be provided by private enterprise.<sup>7</sup> Expenditures for war can hardly be placed in any economic category, and their relation to the level of living is obscure. It is probably true that private education has expanded much less rapidly because of the increased expenditure for public education; at the same time these expenditures have brought education to the masses, and it is unlikely that private philanthropy and private expenditures for education would have done so. Such things as parks and playgrounds, practically nonexistent in 1860, would never have been ade-

<sup>7</sup> On the other hand, if the resources employed by the various units of government were, instead, employed by private enterprise, more goods and services would be produced for the market. It cannot be said that the level of living would be "higher" or "lower," but there would be a greater volume of goods and services in some categories, a smaller volume in other categories. The effects of government expenditures upon the *distribution* of goods and services are especially significant.

quately provided except by public expenditures. Measures to protect the consumer as a consumer and to protect the health of the population are essentially public services, to be paid for from public revenues. The enormous expenditure on roads represents in large part changes due to the automobile, which was unthought-of in 1860. And, certainly, expenditures for the poor and defective classes do not represent a transfer of function from private business to the state.

Whether all these expenditures are legitimate burdens on the taxpayer is open to question. Nevertheless, one must conclude that, while the typical American taxpayer is now paying a much higher tax bill than he was before the Civil War, he is getting something for his money which otherwise he could obtain only with difficulty—schools for his children, parks, surfaced roads, protection as a consumer, and so on through the long list. Similarly, one must conclude that the taxpayer of 1860 was paying higher taxes than he would have in 1790—but he, too, was getting something for his money.

*Municipal police and fire departments.*—The trend in public expenditures is well illustrated by the change in organization in police departments during the nineteenth century. While conditions in the Colonial period are less idyllic than we sometimes like to imagine them, it is certainly true that there was less crime and less occasion and opportunity for crime in the villages of that period than in the crowded cities of the last half of the nineteenth century. The growth of cities made protection against fire, too, a more pressing need. Even so, in 1860 only a very few of the largest cities had full-time paid police and fire departments. This does not mean that the cities were completely without protection; it means that much of what protection there was, was given (voluntarily or involuntarily) without payment of salaries—instead of taxes there were contributions of time and of work. Such a system, however, could not afford adequate protection in the period we are considering.

Up to the middle of the nineteenth century the duties of police protection had always been divided between two entirely separate bodies, the night "watch" and the day "ward." Each

of these consisted of only a handful of men, untrained (many held other jobs under private employment), without uniforms and commanding no respect in the community. In the cities they were usually organized on a ward basis, were usually deeply involved in local politics, and seldom showed any disposition to work with their colleagues in other wards. The growth of cities and the changes in the structure of social life made more satisfactory police forces imperative. Boston consolidated its watch and ward into a single police department in 1854—the first in the United States—and in 1858 put the patrolmen in uniform (blue coat, police buttons, blue pants, black vests; the chief and captains in dress coats, deputies and patrolmen in frock coats). In 1860 the force was increased to 292 men, a captain of detectives was appointed, and a sailboat purchased for the use of the harbor police, who manned it with four patrolmen.<sup>8</sup>

The police forces of New York City had never been able to keep that city's lawlessness in check; and in 1857 the State of New York took action by creating a Metropolitan Police District which in 1860 included New York City, Brooklyn, Westchester, Richmond, and Queens. Before the new Metropolitan Police could assume control, they had to break the determined opposition of the mayor and the old police force. In 1860 there were 1,600 patrolmen (one to every 500 persons in New York City, one to every 1,380 in Brooklyn, none elsewhere) and 183 police of higher rank, paid salaries ranging from \$300 a year for patrolmen to \$5,000 for the superintendent. Philadelphia's police, long a public scandal, were reorganized in the fifties, and by 1860 were well drilled, neat, and clean. But there were not

<sup>8</sup> The best general survey of police departments is Raymond B. Fosdick, *American Police Systems* (New York: Century Co., 1920). For local departments see Augustine E. Costello, *Our Police Protectors* (New York: A. E. Costello, 1885); John J. Flinn, *History of the Chicago Police* (Chicago: Police Book Fund, 1887); Leonard V. Harrison, *Police Administration in Boston* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1934); Howard O. Spragle, *The Philadelphia Police: Past and Present* (Philadelphia: 1887). Such memoirs as Edward H. Savage, *A Chronological History of the Boston Watch and Police, from 1631 to 1865: Together with the Recollections of a Boston Police Officer* (Boston: The author, 1865); and George W. Walling, *Recollections of a New York Chief of Police* (New York: Caxton Book Concern, Ltd., 1887) are also informative.

enough of them to protect the city against vandalism by gangs and rioters—in 1859 there were 739 miles of streets and alleys to patrol, with an active force of only 583 men (123 on the day force, and two night forces of 230 men each). In 1860, for the first time, they were put in uniform—gray trousers with black stripes, single-breasted blue frock coats with brass buttons, and a cap with broad top and leather visor. Chicago's patrolmen were sometimes uniformed and sometimes not, depending upon the whim of the administration; there were only 50 or 60 of them; and throughout the later fifties they were completely unable to prevent riots, while gambling and vice flourished. Newark, Cincinnati, Baltimore, and New Orleans had also consolidated their day and night forces under a single administration.

In the other cities and towns there was the same inefficiency and confusion that there had always been. In small communities there was only a constable or two for a day force, and the few night watchmen were ineffectual. In the larger towns and cities the watch and ward were distinct organizations, working at cross-purposes and frequently unpaid. When salaries were paid, they were so small that only the infirm or the incompetent or those with other jobs could afford to join the force.

Fire departments were not upon precisely the same footing as police departments. The patrolmen's duties were not pleasant ones, and they had to be performed regularly. No one particularly wanted to be a patrolman; and to maintain a force the members had to be paid something or else required to serve as part of their duties to the municipality. But it was fun to be a fireman. The only time the fireman had duties to perform was when a fire actually broke out, and even then the thrills were enough compensation. Besides, there were the social privileges conferred by membership in the volunteer companies, and frequently firemen were exempt from jury service, militia duties, and road taxes. Consequently, no fire company ever suffered from lack of volunteers (although the volunteers might not come from the best element of society), and in several cities the fire departments strenuously opposed civic efforts to institute paid

departments. During the fifties the departments in the cities were more and more taken over by gangs of toughs and rowdies, more interested in brawling with other companies than in putting out fires and not infrequently interested also in the loot that might be obtained. In a time of wood construction and a total lack of any fire-prevention activities, fires were bound to be numerous, and it was generally believed that the firemen themselves were not above a little arson if there were not fires enough to suit them.<sup>9</sup>

Because of these conditions a few cities were putting their departments on a full-time paid basis, and the steam fire engines, first used in the fifties, gave them an opportunity to do so; the engines were too expensive for the volunteer companies to purchase; and, while they could be operated by smaller companies than the old hand engines, the enginemen had to be competent and responsible. In 1860 Boston and Cincinnati had paid departments, and Chicago had put at least the members of the steam-engine companies on a full-time basis; elsewhere the companies were still volunteer. New York did not have a paid department until 1865, or Philadelphia until 1870. (In rare instances, firemen were paid nominal amounts for the time actually spent fighting fires, and it was common practice for the city to contribute toward the purchase of new equipment.) Boston paid its engineers \$60.00, its firemen \$50.00, and drivers \$50.00 a month; Cincinnati paid its firemen \$1.25 a day.

Boston's was the only department really under direct municipal control. New York's departments were only loosely organized, and until the creation of the Metropolitan Fire Department in 1865 they were largely free of control. In 1860 there

<sup>9</sup> See Herbert Asbury, *Ye Olde Fire Laddies* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1930); Arthur Wellington Brayley, *A Complete History of the Boston Fire Department* (Boston: John P. Dale & Co., 1889); J. Albert Cassedy, *The Firemen's Record* (Philadelphia, n.d.); Augustine E. Costello, *Our Firemen* (New York: A. E. Costello, 1887); David A. Dana, *The Fireman* (Boston: James French & Co., 1858); Thomas O'Conner, *History of the Fire Department of New Orleans* (New Orleans, 1895); Alfred Sanderson, *Historical Sketch of the Union Fire Company No. 1, of the City of Lancaster, from 1760 to 1879* (Lancaster: The company, 1879); and George W. Sheldon, *The Story of the Volunteer Fire Department of the City of New York* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1882). There are other histories of local departments, a few books and brochures on the old fire engines, and a considerable amount of information in local histories and in travelers' accounts.

were 50 engine companies, 56 hose companies, and 17 hook and ladder companies, with a total force of 4,227 men. As the population moved up town, the practice of "bunking" became more common—downtown companies almost had to provide sleeping quarters for their members. Those sleeping in the engine-house could get the apparatus ready, or even to the fire, while the other firemen were arriving. Philadelphia's department was nominally under the city's control, but the firemen were distinguished above all else for their rioting. In 1858 there were 43 engine companies, 37 hose companies, 5 hook and ladder companies, and 1 steam-engine company, with a combined total of 2,100 active members.

The introduction of steam fire engines began in 1853, when a Cincinnati builder finally succeeded in making one that seemed practical. These early engines were frequently defeated in pumping matches against hand engines, but they had more endurance and by the later fifties had been so improved as to leave no doubt of their superiority over the hand variety. They were, however, heavy and required horses for motive power—the hand engines had usually been pulled to the fire by the members of the company. By 1860 there were steam fire engines in Cincinnati (7), Boston, New York City (3?), Buffalo (1; 6 by 1861–62), Philadelphia (21, at an average cost of \$3,250), Chicago (6), St. Louis (4, more ordered), Baltimore (1), New Orleans (1; 7 by 1861), and Louisville (5) and perhaps in other cities. In Baltimore, Buffalo, and Louisville and very likely in other cities the steam fire engines were immediately put in charge of paid fire departments, while the others were allowed to continue on a volunteer basis. As more engines were ordered, the whole department was gradually put on a paid basis, with no attendant disturbance.

Still another improvement in fire-fighting adopted by a few metropolitan departments was the fire-alarm telegraph, by means of which fires could be immediately reported to the central office and bells rung to indicate the district. (Districts were so large that it still took some little time before the fire depart-



ments finally located the fire.) By 1860 there were fire-alarm telegraphs in Boston, Philadelphia, St. Louis, Baltimore, and New Orleans. New York City had only the beginnings of a system and went without a complete system until 1869. While the fire departments were being made more efficient by the new steam engines and fire-alarm telegraph, their work was being made easier for them by the expansion of the municipal waterworks. Reservoirs were larger and more available, the pumps could supply more pressure, and there was less need to depend upon wells and cisterns.

Meanwhile, in other cities the fire departments remained untouched by these new developments. In a city of some size there would be a number of hand engines, hose carriages, and hook and ladder carriages, with full equipment of hose, buckets, axes, and other supplies, all standing ready to be run out by volunteers when a fire broke out. In a village the fire department might consist only of some buckets and ladders, readily available in case of emergency. Between the two were all possible variations. But in any community the volunteers were more than just firefighters. They were a social organization who kept their engines brilliantly decorated and polished, ready for parades (in some cities the parade engines were too resplendent to take to fires), and whose balls enlivened the social calendar. To the last they strenuously resisted the attempts to break up their companies and supersede them with small, full-time, paid companies.

*Public poor relief.*—In the New England states poor relief followed the Elizabethan pattern. There were strict requirements for settlement, and the town where the pauper was "settled" was responsible for his support if there were no relatives who could be held liable. Adults were contracted out to the lowest bidder, maintained by the selectmen, or placed in the poorhouse or farm. The poorhouses were used to care for all kinds of dependents—the sick and infirm, the aged, orphans, drunkards, lunatics, ne'er-do-wells—and had a well-earned reputation for allowing inmates the absolute minimum of the necessities of

life.<sup>10</sup> Pauper children were, if possible, apprenticed, and in some states able-bodied adults, if shiftless, were also bound out. Although expenses were kept at a minimum (one Rhode Island town allowed only \$56 a person for a full year's total support), poor relief was a major element in public expenditures. A Connecticut commission estimated that care of the poor accounted for nearly a third of all town expense in the state and 90 per cent of all state expenditure.<sup>11</sup> During the fifties there were the beginnings of "institutionalism," especially in such states as Massachusetts, where there were a great number of paupers to be looked after. Lunatics were most commonly segregated in state institutions, there were a few state poorhouses, a few schools for the children among the "state's poor," and perhaps a few special institutions for defectives other than lunatics.

New York State had a particularly heavy burden of poor relief to carry. During the year ending December 1, 1859, 228,517 town and county paupers had been relieved or supported and

<sup>10</sup> S. H. Elliot's *A Look at Home: Or, Life in the Poorhouse of New England* (New York: H. Dexter & Co., 1860), though intended as "propaganda," comes pretty close to the truth.

<sup>11</sup> There are now a number of studies of the history of public welfare activities in various states. See, for instance, John E. Briggs, *History of Social Legislation in Iowa* (Iowa City: Iowa State University, 1915); Grace A. Browning, *The Development of Poor Relief Legislation in Kansas* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1935); Isabel Campbell Bruce and Edith Eickhoff, *The Michigan Poor Law* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1936); Frances Cahn and Valeska Bary, *Welfare Activities of Federal, State, and Local Governments in California, 1850-1934* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1936); Edward Warren Capen, *The Historical Development of the Poor Law of Connecticut* ("Columbia University Studies in Political Science," Vol. XXII [New York, 1905]); Margaret Creech, *Three Centuries of Poor Law Administration* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1936); John Cummings, *Poor Laws of Massachusetts and New York* ("Publications of the American Economic Association," Vol. X, No. 4 [New York: Macmillan Co., 1895]); William Clinton Heffner, *History of Poor Relief Legislation in Pennsylvania, 1682-1913* (Cleona, Pa.: Holzapfel Pub. Co., 1913); Robert W. Kelso, *The History of Public Poor Relief in Massachusetts, 1620-1920* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1922); Aileen Elizabeth Kennedy, *The Ohio Poor Law and Its Administration* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1934); David M. Schneider, *The History of Public Welfare in New York State, 1609-1866* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1938); Alice Shaffer and Mary Wysor Keefer, *The Indiana Poor Law* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1936); and Elizabeth Wisner, *Public Welfare Administration in Louisiana* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1930).

229,787 temporarily relieved.<sup>12</sup> There were county poorhouses in fifty-five of the state's sixty counties and at least a dozen town and other institutions for the support of the poor.<sup>13</sup> What these poorhouses were like may be seen from the report of a Senate committee:

The poorhouses through the State may be generally described as badly constructed, ill-arranged, ill-warmed and ill-ventilated. The rooms are crowded with inmates; and the air, particularly in the sleeping departments is very noxious, and to visitors almost insufferable. In some cases, as many as forty-five inmates occupy a single dormitory, with low ceilings and sleeping boxes arranged in three tiers one above another. Good health is incompatible with such arrangements. They make it an impossibility.<sup>14</sup>

Many lacked facilities for giving medical attention, proper classification was neglected, the moral atmosphere was low, and the food insufficient and poor. Little effort was made to find work for the inmates, and the treatment of the mentally incompetent was shocking. Outside New York City there was little success in getting even the children out of the poorhouses—in 1857 there were still 5,403 children in poorhouses in the state.<sup>15</sup> New York City alone had more paupers than most states: during 1857 the city almshouse admitted 4,202 (2,705 of them Irish), the nursery department at Randall's Island cared for 2,155 children, and the workhouse for 5,369.<sup>16</sup> The children were sent to school and at an age not under ten were apprenticed. In 1860 the city created a Department of Public Charities and Correction, having charge of the almshouse, the workhouse, the "nurseries" for destitute children, the county lunatic asylum, the potter's field, the penitentiary and city prison, and the hospitals connected with them.

In Pennsylvania minors were bound out, though with the express provision that children were to be given at least three

<sup>12</sup> New York, Secretary of State, *Annual Report in Relation to Statistics of the Poor in the State of New York: Transmitted to the Legislature, February 11, 1860* (Albany, 1860), pp. 4-5.

<sup>13</sup> *Census of the State of New York for 1865*, pp. 572-73.

<sup>14</sup> Quoted in Schneider, pp. 249-50.

<sup>15</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 340-43.

<sup>16</sup> New York City, *Annual Report of the Governors of the Alms House for the Year 1857* (New York, 1858), *passim*.

months of schooling a year, and adults having settlement were usually placed in a county or district poorhouse. Most of the agricultural counties had poor farms, and for the most part those willing and able to work were given work and provided with the materials they needed. Philadelphia's almshouse consisted of four main buildings with a capacity of 3,000 persons and an insane asylum with a capacity of 300; two other insane asylums and institutions for the deaf and dumb and for the blind were operated in connection with it.

In the states of the Old Northwest, which inherited the Elizabethan poor law by way of New England, there was the usual confusion between permanent and temporary poor and between town and county responsibility, the usual lack of state responsibility, and the usual tendency toward institutional and away from outdoor relief. Paupers who were properly "settled" and so entitled to relief might be cared for in town or county poorhouses or contracted out. More and more counties were acquiring poor farms, which gave the poor something to do and aided in reducing expenses. Children were apprenticed. In Chicago the county poorhouse was unable to satisfy the demands made upon it, and the city shifted as many of its burdens as possible to private benefactors and philanthropic agencies. "Where the government did assume responsibility, conditions sometimes reflected an inability to control or an insensitiveness to understand."<sup>17</sup>

In the South there were fewer paupers to be supported at public expense.<sup>18</sup> A large part of the population were slaves, who were the planters' responsibility, and there was a smaller urban population, almost completely free from the new immigration which was imposing such a burden upon the northeastern states.

Legally, the poor were the unpropertied class, persons incapable in the opinion of the wardens to earn a living by reason of physical or mental incapacity to labor. A child was not permitted to become a pauper even in infancy if it was possible to apprentice him to someone who was willing to give him

<sup>17</sup> Pierce, II, 338.

<sup>18</sup> See the statistics on pauperism, *Eighth Census: Mortality and Miscellaneous*, p. 512.

maintenance in return for the labor rendered. As a rule, therefore, the legal poor were afflicted children, idiots, insane persons, invalids, crippled and aged persons.<sup>19</sup>

The poor were cared for by allowances to individual paupers, by letting the paupers out on contract, by selling them to the lowest bidder, or by poorhouses. Private philanthropy seems to have been a bigger factor than in the North in caring for the poor.

On the Frontier the legal provisions, where there were any, were similar to those in the East—apprenticing, county poorhouses and poor farms, and so on—but there were few paupers, and it is doubtful if these early laws ever functioned. In California there were “hospitals” in some counties to care for the poor; in others private persons contracted to provide for them. Not until 1879 was there any provision for the needy other than those who were sick.

#### PRIVATE PHILANTHROPY

*The philanthropists of the period.*—There were few large philanthropies before the Civil War. Of those still remembered in 1860 the largest was Stephen Girard’s bequest in 1831, which finally amounted to nearly seven million dollars. This went to found Girard College, to Philadelphia and to the state of Pennsylvania, and to charities. John Jacob Astor had died in 1848, leaving about five hundred thousand dollars of his twenty-million-dollar estate to public objects; four hundred thousand went to found the Astor Library.

Other gifts of the period, some of them appearing munificent at the time, are small by modern standards. Peter Cooper spent six hundred and sixty thousand dollars on Cooper Union. William Corcoran gave his art collection and funds to build an art gallery (completed after the Civil War), besides making a few contributions to schools, asylums, and other institutions. John Lowell, Jr., gave a quarter of a million to found the Lowell Lectures. George Peabody, an American who from 1837 made Lon-

<sup>19</sup> G. G. Johnson, *Ante-bellum North Carolina*, p. 690.

don his home, gave a quarter of a million to Peabody Institute, a million dollars to Baltimore for another institute, a large sum to the Southern Educational Fund, and made large bequests, after the war, to Harvard, Yale, and other schools and institutions. At his death in 1869 he had given a total of nine million dollars, three million of it to the Southern Educational Fund. Matthew Vassar, a brewer, gave four hundred thousand dollars to found Vassar College, which was incorporated in 1861, opened in 1865.

This does not exhaust the list of major philanthropists; but it does include, as far as I am aware, all the Americans who, between 1850 and 1865, gave as much as a quarter of a million dollars to public objects. It is not a long list, and, except for Girard and Peabody, none of the men gave great amounts. For this there are at least two reasons. One is that there was no "social conscience" to demand that the rich give back their fortunes in the form of philanthropies, and there was little disposition on the part of the rich to do so—the Astor fortune is a case in point. Prestige was acquired by accumulating fortunes, not by giving them away.

The other reason I think of is that there were few really wealthy men. The only great fortune I know of, aside from those of the men already named, was that of Nicholas Longworth, who left about thirteen million dollars at his death in 1863. In 1850, according to contemporary estimates, there were twenty-five millionaires in New York, eighteen in Boston, and nine in Philadelphia, few of them possessing more than two million dollars. A few years later there were supposed to be ninety-one millionaires in New York.<sup>20</sup> In the South there were few, if any, large fortunes.

*Organized philanthropies.*—Since the rich could not be expected to bear a very heavy load of philanthropy, the private charities had to rely almost entirely upon the small gifts of persons of moderate means. As Appendix A makes plain, there was not a very large number of people even with incomes of a few

<sup>20</sup> C. W. Wright, p. 1037.

thousand dollars, so we need not be surprised if the aggregate of all charities was not great. A few examples of the work of philanthropic agencies will give some idea of their scope and their resources.

One of the oldest benevolent societies still functioning in 1860 was the Humane Society of the Commonwealth of Massachusetts, which had been in existence since 1785. The Humane Society engaged in many activities, chiefly life-saving along the coast and caring for the survivors of shipwrecks, but also including contributions to hospitals and other charities.

Outstanding among charitable groups in New York was the Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor, organized in 1843 for personal contact with the poor and for granting material relief sparingly and only in small amounts. Its emphasis was on moral assistance. In the fifties it was making from forty to fifty thousand visits a year, spending from forty to seventy thousand dollars. The Five Points House of Industry was an outgrowth of a Methodist mission in one of New York's toughest neighborhoods. It was intended to give the poor a chance to help themselves and had a sewing-room, a bakery, a basket-making workroom, and other workshops. There was a day school in connection and a farm to which children and adults could be sent for recuperation. The Children's Aid Society of New York was founded in 1853 by Charles Loring Brace for "the training and the general improvement of the conditions of the homeless and friendless children roaming the streets of New York." It furnished lodgings and meals for a few cents each to thousands of boys in its Newsboys' Lodging House, sheltered homeless girls in its Girls' Home, instructed thousands of children in its industrial schools, and, beginning in the fifties, sent hundreds of children to new homes in the West.

The American Seamen's Friend Society, founded in 1828, had seamen's churches in foreign ports, sailors' homes in New York and other cities, and carried on work for seamen in numerous coast and inland cities. In 1859 it started collecting loan libraries, and in 1860 sent ninety-four of them to sea. The New York Female Benevolent Society was organized in 1833; and an-

other group, withdrawing from it the next year, started the New York Female Moral Reform Society, with aid in finding employment one of its objectives. The American Female Moral Reform Society was organized in 1839 and undertook prison-work, lobbying, missionary work, and the maintenance of a home for destitute children. In 1849 it took the name "American Female Guardian Society" and in the fifties conducted industrial schools for street children.<sup>21</sup>

There were innumerable societies, besides the missionary boards and Bible societies of which I shall speak in the next chapter, engaged in charitable work of various sorts; the city directories of the fifties list dozens of charities. In New York City alone in 1853 there were 90 charities, besides 22 asylums, 8 hospitals, and 7 dispensaries. There were 75 fraternal societies, many with benevolent functions.<sup>22</sup> Private charity was largely responsible for the country's 23 asylums for the blind, with their thousand pupils.<sup>23</sup> There were the American Colonization Society (organized in 1817), whose mission was to send Negroes to Liberia, and there were homes for indigent females. Orphans were a favorite object of charity, and there were dozens of orphan asylums scattered throughout the country.

Such were the philanthropies of the fifties. There were no huge foundations, no large expenditures. The growing humanitarian movement was still closely tied up with the leaders in the campaign for moral reform; the "moral" element was more important than the material aid these societies could give, and their members were stronger on devoted personal service than they were on raising and administering funds. However narrow some of these reformers may have been, we must give them credit for realizing the need for action; and I am not altogether convinced that their "moral" assistance was not a more vital contribution than the large amounts of material assistance doled out in our present enlightened age.

<sup>21</sup> For similar societies in Chicago see Pierce, II, 442-48.

<sup>22</sup> E. Douglas Branch, *The Sentimental Years, 1836-1860* (New York: D. Appleton-Century Co., 1934), pp. 199-200.

<sup>23</sup> Fite, p. 299, citing U.S. House Executive Doc., No. 116 (37th Cong., 2d sess.).



## CHAPTER XI

### EDUCATION, READING, AND THE CHURCH

#### EDUCATION

*The "democratization" of education.*—The American people had, from Colonial days, believed in education. I can think of no way of phrasing it other than just that: *they believed in it*. It was an uncritical, unreasoning faith. There was no attempt to discover what the aims of education were or what education should be if those aims were to be realized. No one seems to have raised the question of whether mass education introduced any problems other than simply providing schools. But the American ideal of political equality seemed to call for the education of the voter-citizen; the doctrine of equality of economic opportunity seemed unrealizable without equality of educational opportunity. The old theocratic governments of New England had fostered schools, and the church itself survived the theocracies as an active force in American life—a force which continued to emphasize education. On the college level the churches long made greater contributions to education than did the states.

Despite this belief in education, the United States had been a nation for nearly a century before the ideal of universal free education seemed within reach. During those years the economy's capacity to produce remained so low that education continued to be a luxury: children and teachers could not be removed from the labor supply, and schools and books provided, without leaving the production of material goods perilously low. In the ante bellum North the time was arriving when the ideal could be achieved, and free schools made universal. The South, its population scattered and unindustrialized, lagged behind. The West shared these handicaps of a rural population, but in ideals it shared more closely with the North, and it seemed to be

making more determined efforts than the South to provide its children with schools.

This gradual attainment of an ideal long held can hardly be interpreted apart from the economic development of the country—the growth and urbanization of the population, industrialization and technical progress, the accumulation of wealth.<sup>1</sup> As these made possible a rising scale of living, humanitarian movements and the labor movement<sup>2</sup> resulted in an increasing pressure on cities and states to provide free schools. The continuous movement of the population, and particularly the westward movement, carried with it this new insistence on the old ideals, from which no section of the country could be completely isolated. It is possible, too, that the immigrants from Europe had their own contribution to make to American education.

*The elementary schools.*—At best it is difficult to devise units in which educational progress can be measured. The difficulties are greater for 1860 than for more recent years, not only because the reports are incomplete, but to an even greater degree because of the extreme variability of standards in that day. "High schools" were frequently only more advanced elementary schools; and "colleges" were frequently no more advanced than present-day high schools. The editor of the statistics on education in the *Eighth Census* (1860), after several pages of tables, summaries, and analyses, finally made a heroic guess and put the number of elementary schools in the country at 100,000 public and 50,000 private, plus 171 special schools, for defectives, delinquents, and orphans.<sup>3</sup>

In Table 45 of Appendix G, I have reproduced some of the more significant of the Census summaries. In the country as a

<sup>1</sup> For an extended treatment of this thesis see Frank T. Carlton, *Economic Influences upon Educational Progress in the United States, 1820-1850* ("University of Wisconsin Economics and Political Science Series," Vol. IV, No. 1 [Bulletin of the University No. 221; Madison, 1908]).

<sup>2</sup> One of the first clearly articulated demands of the American labor movement was the demand for free schools. This may not have been wholly idealistic: the more children there were in school, the fewer there were in the labor market and the less the pressure on the wage level.

<sup>3</sup> *Mortality and Miscellaneous*, p. 509. The earlier pages (pp. 503 ff.) contain much interesting data I have not been able to incorporate here.

whole about 60 white persons were in school for every 100 white children between the ages of five and nineteen.<sup>4</sup> In the North this ratio was about 67 to 100 (varying from about 51 in Missouri, a doubtfully northern state, to nearly 89 in Maine); in the South the average was  $44\frac{1}{2}$  to the hundred (varying from 28 in Florida to over 56 in Delaware); and in the West about 40 to 100 (64 in Oregon, while none at all were reported in school in Colorado and Nevada). If the number attending school is compared with the number of persons aged five to fourteen, 85 were attending school for every 100 in that age group: in the North 96 (Maine 132 and the other New England states well above the average), in the South 63, and in the West 55.

Properly to evaluate these figures one would have to take account of differences in the length of the school term, as well as of differences in the regularity of attendance. For this reason the actual length of the period of schooling is a somewhat more significant index. The United States Bureau of Education estimates that by 1860 each person in the population received during his life, on the average, 434 days of schooling (or, in terms of school-months of 20 days each, 21 months and 14 days). This was a decided improvement over 1800, when the average had been only 82 days (4 months and 2 days), but was still far below the attainments of 1930, when the average was 1,591 days (79 months and 11 days).

What were these children being taught during their 434 days in school?<sup>5</sup> The historians of education have had little to say about the ante bellum curriculum; but it appears that in the elementary grades the children received instruction in spelling, reading, grammar, penmanship, arithmetic, geography, and morals. Such subjects as singing and drawing still received only irregular attention. It would be interesting to know more about

<sup>4</sup> No explanation is made in the Census as to the distinction between the "number attending school" and the smaller "number of pupils." Presumably, the "number attending" represents total enrolment, the "number of pupils" being an average attendance. The difference between enrolment and attendance was everywhere very great—see below, pp. 298-99.

<sup>5</sup> For the quality of the instruction see below, p. 302.

what subjects were taught and how they were taught and what books were used.

Legally, the rate-bill had been everywhere abolished in cities by 1860 and existed in rural and town schools in only five states.<sup>6</sup> This did not mean that free schools were immediately forthcoming. Arthur Charles Cole writes:

In most Eastern states the "rate-bill" lingered in whole or in part. This practice involved a charge upon parents to supplement the school revenues and prolong the school term and was assessed in proportion to the number of pupils in each family. While provision was made for its remittance in the case of parents who could not pay, there were many whose pride kept them from declaring their need and whose children were therefore kept out of school. In New York state the issue of free schools was fought out in a series of popular referenda in which the city voters advocating tax-supported schools met heavy opposition from the rural counties and from the supporters of the parochial system. The result was a compromise which continued the state rate bill in effect—it was not repealed until 1867—and at the same time authorized such school districts as wished to do so to provide free schools by local taxation. Under this arrangement New York City organized a system of free schools. In June, 1853, therefore, the Public School Society of that metropolis, which had maintained an expensive system on its own account, decided that its goal had been achieved and agreed to surrender its schools to the local board of education. Nowhere, aside from a mild requirement in Massachusetts, was there as yet the feature of compulsory attendance.<sup>7</sup>

Making the schools of New York City free did not immediately bring all the children into them. The Board of Public School Officers, in 1856, estimated that 60,000 children between the ages of five and fifteen were not attending school. In 1858 the number of children registered for school was 139,441, but the average attendance was only 51,430.<sup>8</sup> The problem of rural education was even less adequately met. J. D. Burns wrote that in 1863 the rural schools of New York and New Jersey were likely to be little better than none. The buildings were dilapidated,

<sup>6</sup> Ellwood P. Cubberly, *Public Education in the United States* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1934), p. 273.

<sup>7</sup> *Irrepressible Conflict*, pp. 207-8. Massachusetts' general compulsory education law dated from 1862 (Henry W. Farnum, *Chapters in the History of Social Legislation in the United States to 1860* [Washington: Carnegie Institution, 1938], p. 164).

<sup>8</sup> *Annual Report of the Association for Improving the Condition of the Poor, for the Year 1861*, p. 52. This and other Association reports discuss the truancy problem in New York. For an Englishwoman's opinion of New York schools see Isabella Bishop, pp. 346-51.

there were no playgrounds, and the books were poor.<sup>9</sup> On the basis of Census reports, Pennsylvania schools were no better attended than those of New York, although as early as 1809 the Pennsylvania legislature had founded the public school system by passing an act to provide for the education of the poor; in 1836 it had been specifically declared that the benefits of the act were not to be restricted to the poor.<sup>10</sup>

When it is remembered that the school systems of the other states fell as far short of perfection as those of New York and Pennsylvania, there is no need to labor the point that even the North had a long way to go before reaching its goal. In Chicago estimates put the number of children not attending school in 1856 at more than 4,000, or about a fourth of those between the ages of five and fifteen; many more went less than a month. The school buildings failed to keep pace with the school population, and, despite the use of ramshackle wooden structures built for other purposes, children had to stand. Even the passage in 1857 of a law providing for the financial support of the schools by the city property tax and the creation of a board of education the same year failed to improve matters very much.<sup>11</sup>

That southern education compared unfavorably with that of the North was recognized by many southerners,<sup>12</sup> but little was

<sup>9</sup> P. 157. This is not surprising, considering that in the country as a whole the average annual income of all public schools was only \$4.53 per pupil; the total cost of all educational institutions (\$33,990,482) was only \$1.26 per free white person (*Eighth Census: Mortality and Miscellaneous*, p. 503).

<sup>10</sup> Edward P. Allinson and Boies Penrose, *Philadelphia, 1681-1887* ("Johns Hopkins University Studies in Historical and Political Science," Extra Vol. II [Baltimore, 1887]), pp. 97-98 and 227.

<sup>11</sup> Pierce, II, 339, 391. During the year ending February 1, 1860, when there were 52,861 children under twenty-one in Chicago, only 14,199 were enrolled in school, and the average daily enrolment was only 6,649; during the year ending February 1, 1861, the total enrolment was 16,547 and the average daily enrolment, 7,582. Cost of the schools per pupil, based on daily enrolment, was \$12.61 and \$12.67 in the two years, respectively (Pierce, II, 512-13).

<sup>12</sup> Cf. the numerous articles on educational topics in *De Bow's Review* and other southern periodicals. What the North thought of southern education may be judged from Long's opinion: "Very little provision is made for the education of the poor. The school-houses are lonely, desolate, wretched-looking, one story buildings, situated with no regard to shade, convenience, or play-grounds. What windows! what doors! what benches without backs! what fine places to give the boys spinal diseases and consumption! There is not much difficulty in raising money in the South for a barbecue, or to procure pine

done about it. Young sons of the planters were tutored until ready for college, and there were governesses for the daughters. It was common for the families of several planters to share the services of teachers and governesses.<sup>13</sup> In North Carolina the "subscription" (private) schools were for the most part rude cabins, poorly lighted and ill equipped, and the public school buildings were little better. Equipment was of the meagerest: few had playgrounds; many had no outhouses; and globes, maps, and even blackboards were rare; there were small and uncomfortable benches for seats, rude planks for desks.<sup>14</sup> In Alabama the beginning of the fifties found education a matter of private enterprise; the close of the decade found the state assuming responsibility. There were still few schools, these poorly equipped; and even in the fifties and after many schools were dilapidated log cabins. It was the custom for a group of planters to assume responsibility for schooling their own children and to admit others at stated rates.<sup>15</sup> Some southern cities had free schools: Savannah had had free schools since 1816.<sup>16</sup>

Up to the fifties there had been little time for education in the Old Northwest:

In 1850 only a few schools were available in the West and terms were often three months or less. Over two-thirds of the buildings were log houses, many of the rest were shanties or temporary shacks. In one Illinois county the average worth of twenty-one buildings was sixty-five dollars. Now, however, came rapid development. The organization of a public system under state superintendents of instruction and the principle of free education were promptly adopted. Wisconsin's first constitution (1848) opened the doors of the schools freely to all. Indiana and Ohio followed in 1852 and 1853. The next year Illinois made provision for a state school tax, for unlimited taxa-

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and hickory poles and flags, or to buy whiskey, for political purposes; but when funds are wanted for a library, to build a school-house, or to increase the salary of a school teacher—that is quite another question" (Long, p. 89).

<sup>13</sup> Smedes, pp. 78-81; Hopley, I, 48. One of the many young men from the North who went South as a teacher was Van Buren, whose memoirs are of some interest.

<sup>14</sup> G. G. Johnson, *Ante-bellum North Carolina*, pp. 311-13.

<sup>15</sup> Boyd, pp. 119-21. She gives as typical prices for schoolbooks: reader, 25 cents; speller and definer, 25 cents; speller, 10 cents; arithmetic, 15 cents; grammar, 25 cents; geography (with plates), \$1.25; astronomy, \$1.25; philosophy and physiology, \$1.00 each (p. 137).

<sup>16</sup> *Tenth Census*, XIX, 175 (see also Burke, pp. 195 ff., for Georgia schools).

tion, and for a free school term of six months in every district. The number of schools doubled and trebled, while enrollment increased even more rapidly. Soon Illinois was boasting that only one child of school age in fifteen was not in attendance and that the average term was nearly seven months.<sup>17</sup>

In one Illinois village the first school was held in an old, unused cabin, where long, wide, unplanned boards were supported by pegs set into holes bored in the wall. The schools of the early fifties were subscription schools—supported by parents or patrons—but the middle fifties free schools came in with general taxation.<sup>18</sup>

The Iowa school described by MacBride, built by a “raising bee,” was much better than the typical frontier school. It had a granite foundation, on which were laid the logs, beveled and notched. The floor was of slabs, the roof shingled, and the walls—with long, narrow glass windows—chinked with mortar. The ceiling was close-battened, and the fireplace opened into an outside chimney. Benches were of slabs and fitted poles, and the desks were of inch board.<sup>19</sup> In Denver, Golden, and other Colorado towns the first schools were log cabins, with leaky roofs and unglazed windows, sometimes without doors; as time went on these were replaced with frame buildings. There were no free schools in Colorado until 1861—the expenses were met by tuition charges of \$1.50 or \$3.00 a month.<sup>20</sup> In Utah there was little coined money until the railroad came through, and the schools—rock, adobe, frame, or log—were built by co-operative effort. Seats were boards supported by pegs set into the walls, and small children sat on blocks; there were no blackboards, maps, or regular schoolbooks, no paper (scraps of wastepaper were saved for school, and in some schools the children even used

<sup>17</sup> A. C. Cole, pp. 205-6.

<sup>18</sup> C. B. Johnson, pp. 97-101; chap. x describes the country schools.

<sup>19</sup> MacBride, pp. 71-74.

<sup>20</sup> A. J. Fynn and L. R. Hafen, “Early Education in Colorado,” *Colorado Magazine*, XII (1935), 13-23; O. J. Goldrick, “The First School in Denver,” *Colorado Magazine*, VI (1929), 72-74. Throughout the West the first schools were private schools. Previous to 1859 nearly all Kansas schools were private, and it was only beginning in that year that rapid progress in public schooling was made there; the Dakotas in 1861 had a few private schools but none public (Edwin G. Dexter, *A History of Education in the United States* [New York: Macmillan Co., 1922], pp. 119-21).

the palms of their hands for slates). Some schools had desks and seats of split logs and stakes; some had glass windows, some had fireplaces.<sup>21</sup>

*Teacher-training.*—An ever present problem, and one intensified by the sudden growth in public education, was that of securing satisfactory instruction. The East took the lead in preparing teachers; and in 1860 nine northern states had the twelve state normal schools, while the fifteen other states having teachers' institutes were all in the northeastern quarter.<sup>22</sup> New Jersey required of its teachers that they be "distinct and accurate readers," be able to spell correctly and write a legible hand, and be well versed in the definition of words, in arithmetic, geography, history (American history, at least), and in English grammar; in addition they were expected to have good morals and a proper attitude.<sup>23</sup> Even with these modest requirements, competent teachers were not easily obtained in out-of-the-way localities, where only small remuneration could be made. In 1863 the average salary paid to male teachers in the country schools was said to be \$380 a year and to female teachers \$233.<sup>24</sup>

*Secondary schools.*—"For the average boy and girl of 1850 public education ended in the common schools. Some fortunate few continued their training in the private or semi-private academies that were just reaching the zenith of their development."<sup>25</sup> While the period of rapid expansion of academies was over—the increase between 1850 and 1860 (from 6,085 academies, with 12,260 teachers and 263,096 pupils, to 6,877 academies, with 16,247 teachers and 263,096 pupils, according to the Census) failed to match the growth in population—the great

<sup>21</sup> L. E. Young, pp. 295-96, 306-8, 314.

<sup>22</sup> Cubberly, p. 324. It is interesting to note that a writer in a southern periodical, calling for an expansion of the Louisiana system of education, saw no need for normal schools—the graduates of New Orleans high schools were good enough for teachers (*De Bow's Review*, XVIII [1855], 421-22).

<sup>23</sup> Burns, chap. viii.

<sup>24</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 164; see also Appen. B.

<sup>25</sup> A. C. Cole, p. 208. Only 169 boys and girls attended Chicago's high school in its first year (1856), and as late as 1869-70 less than 1 per cent of the school population enrolled in high school (Pierce, II, 390, 393).



majority of advanced students were still in academies, and the establishment of academies was going on steadily.<sup>26</sup> One in 70 of the white population was supposed to have attended an academy during this period, but little is known as to the average length of schooling or standards of work.<sup>27</sup> There was active rivalry between the advocates of public high schools and of academies.<sup>28</sup>

The academies varied greatly in their physical equipment and in their educational standards. Most of them were, to say the least, undistinguished. At the other extreme was the old Boston Latin School, described by Henry Cabot Lodge:

Charles Adams was in like manner dissatisfied with the instruction given in the Boston Latin School. At that period we had the old-fashioned classical curriculum. Latin, Greek, mathematics, a little classical history and geography, and exercises in declamation. The methods of teaching were largely mechanical: learning by rote the Latin and Greek grammars, which were reviewed every year, writing Latin exercises, memorizing the Greek and Latin prosodies in order to read and to recite Latin and Greek verse, and in those days to make a false quantity in Latin was little short of a crime. It was not the best method of learning languages, which should be acquired as we acquire our own tongue by practice and ear and then syntax and prosody can follow. But there was nevertheless a real mental discipline in it and boys came out of school with considerable knowledge of Greek and Latin. Since then the field of studies has been greatly extended and the methods of teaching it in some directions no doubt improved, but the net result seems to be that boys now know less about more subjects than they did in the middle of the nineteenth century and it is not apparent that they are any better fitted to use, control, and apply their minds, which is after all the real purpose of education.<sup>29</sup>

In the South, while some academies were of brick, the rural academies were often simple frame buildings. They had somewhat better equipment than did the elementary schools—better desks and seats, sometimes maps, globes, and blackboards—but

<sup>26</sup> Elmer E. Brown, *The Making of Our Middle Schools* (New York: Longmans, Green & Co., 1928), p. 314. In Chicago alone during the twenty years beginning with 1850 about 200 schools were opened on a tuition basis, most of them for secondary education (Pierce, II, 395-98).

<sup>27</sup> Isaac L. Kandel, *History of Secondary Education* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1930), p. 418.

<sup>28</sup> Brown, pp. 314-21.

<sup>29</sup> In his memorial address, prefixed to Adams' autobiography, *Charles Francis Adams, 1835-1915* (pp. xxiii-xxiv); see also Adams' own criticism of the Boston Latin School (p. 22).

were otherwise mediocre.<sup>30</sup> Similarly in the West, Illinois academies were crudely built affairs, in which the subjects required by law (reading, writing, arithmetic, spelling, history, geography, grammar) and such other subjects as Latin, algebra, chemistry, and physics were taught.<sup>31</sup>

It is difficult to say how many high schools there were before the Civil War, but the city high school was steadily increasing in importance. Although by Dr. Harris' standards there were only 40 real high schools in the whole country in 1860,<sup>32</sup> Barney's *Report on the American System* listed 80 cities with high schools as early as 1851.<sup>33</sup> It is fair to assume that many so-called "high-schools" were only advanced elementary schools; but, on the other hand, many elementary schools were pushing into the higher ranges.<sup>34</sup> No recent educators seem to have had much interest in the old curriculum, but Chicago's high school—which may or may not be typical—offered instruction in Latin and Greek, astronomy, physiology, natural philosophy, mathematics, and English literature.<sup>35</sup>

In 1860 there were 102 "high schools" in Massachusetts, 161 in Ohio (Cleveland and Columbus having had high schools as early as 1846, Cincinnati, 1847, and Toledo, 1849);<sup>36</sup> and, according to Inglis, there were 321 high schools by 1860, of which 267 were in the three states of Massachusetts, New York, and Ohio.<sup>37</sup> The democratic West was quick to establish high

<sup>30</sup> G. G. Johnson, *Ante-bellum North Carolina*, pp. 310, 313; Boyd, p. 119. According to Long "almost every county town of 1,000 inhabitants has an academy, principally for the sons of the rich" (p. 89).

<sup>31</sup> C. B. Johnson, pp. 102-3; cf. also Joseph S. Schick, "Cultural Beginnings and the Rise of the Theater, German and American, in Eastern Iowa, 1836-1863" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Department of English, University of Chicago, 1937), p. 117.

<sup>32</sup> "Recent Growth of Public High Schools," *Proceedings of the National Education Association*, 1901, pp. 174-80.

<sup>33</sup> Brown, p. 313.

<sup>34</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>35</sup> Pierce, II, 393.

<sup>36</sup> Cubberly, p. 262; John Swett, *American Public Schools* (New York: American Book Co., 1900), p. 75. Massachusetts had in 1826 enacted a law that towns having at least 500 families should organize an English high school and that towns having at least 4,000 families should establish a classical high school. This was repealed in 1840, reenacted in 1848 in spite of opposition by private and denominational schools, academies and seminaries, colleges, and taxpayers (Swett, p. 74).

<sup>37</sup> Kandel, p. 449.

schools. Wisconsin, between 1849 and 1859, established free public high schools at Kenosha, Racine, Janesville, Oshkosh, Sheboygan, Fond du Lac, and Portage. Evansville, Indiana, had its first public high school in 1850, Chicago and San Francisco in 1856. Detroit had a high school in 1858 and St. Louis in 1853, although the latter seems to have been a private school.<sup>38</sup>

"Except in a few conservative communities like Boston, girls took their places in the class-rooms devoted to this more advanced training,"<sup>39</sup> but "female" high schools and academies were still to be found in almost every state of the Union.<sup>40</sup>

*Higher education.*—The high schools, like the academies, were generally intended to prepare students for college. In the decade before the Civil War nearly 100 institutions of higher learning were founded;<sup>41</sup> the number of permanent colleges established by 1861 was 182; and the number of all colleges, permanent and short lived, was well over 200.<sup>42</sup> The geographical distribution of the colleges was unwise—most of the new colleges were in the South, with its growing distrust of the North and of northern schools, and in the West, which despite its sparse population came to have more colleges than the East.<sup>43</sup> The new colleges were most of them denominational, the result of the

<sup>38</sup> Brown, p. 313; Cubberly, p. 262; Dexter, p. 147; Swett, p. 75; James Sazama, "A History of the Development of Public High Schools in Wisconsin" (unpublished M.A. thesis, Department of Education, University of Chicago, 1929). Sarah Gunnels, "A History of the Development of High Schools in Missouri" (unpublished M.A. thesis, Department of Education, University of Chicago, 1922), p. 43.

<sup>39</sup> A. C. Cole, p. 208.

<sup>40</sup> Thomas Woody, *A History of Women's Education in the United States* (New York: Science Press, 1929), I, 393-95; Kandel, p. 518.

<sup>41</sup> A. C. Cole, p. 209.

<sup>42</sup> Donald G. Tewksbury, *The Founding of American Colleges and Universities before the Civil War* (New York: Teachers' College, Columbia University, 1932).

<sup>43</sup> Fite, pp. 236-37; A. C. Cole, p. 209. In 1860, 63 of 896 Harvard students were from the South, 33 of 521 Yale students, and 113 of 312 Princeton students (Charles F. Thwing, *A History of Higher Education in America* [New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1906], pp. 254-55). (It will be noticed that Thwing's figure for the total number of Harvard students is considerably greater than that of Fite—perhaps because Fite specifically excludes preparatory students.)

"misguided zeal" of the eastern churches:<sup>44</sup> of the colleges founded by 1860 only 17 were state schools, and only 2 or 3 others had state connections.<sup>45</sup> Although the idea of state colleges had taken definite form, the real burden still rested upon philanthropy. Practically all the small colleges were poverty stricken, carrying on by means of small gifts and subscriptions; and few even of the older colleges were well endowed.<sup>46</sup> Nor were any of them large. At the beginning of the war Yale had 521 students, Harvard 443, and Princeton 312. Union had an enrolment of 390, Williams of 238, Amherst of 220, Dartmouth of 275, Brown of 232; there were 101 students at the University of Vermont, 140 at the University of Pennsylvania, and 201 at Columbia. Farther west there were 255 students at Michigan, 60 at Beloit, 63 at Dennison, 48 at Western Reserve, 111 at Notre Dame.<sup>47</sup>

During the first quarter of the nineteenth century the common college "branches" had been Latin, Greek, and mathematics; philosophy was the dominant study during the senior year. Hebrew had been dropped in most colleges; French, Spanish, political economy, chemistry, geology, and botany had begun to appear. Under George Ticknor, Smith professor at Harvard, and the more "progressive" members of the administration students were allowed more latitude in choosing their course of study than formerly, but for the most part only in modern languages—and even there the small size of the faculty kept them from having much choice. The idea of giving students this freedom of choice grew in favor between 1826 and 1846 but during the next twenty years encountered faculty opposition. Not until the year 1869-70 did the principle secure a firm place.<sup>48</sup>

<sup>44</sup> Fite, p. 237.

<sup>45</sup> Cubberly, p. 270. Between 1776 and 1865, 238 religious colleges and universities were founded, while only 33 state schools had been organized (Jesse Brundage Sears, "Philanthropy in the History of American Higher Education" [U.S. Bureau of Education, Department of the Interior, Bull. 26 (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1922)], p. 36).

<sup>46</sup> Sears, pp. 51-52.

<sup>47</sup> Fite, pp. 237-38.

<sup>48</sup> Thwing, pp. 300-316. On Ticknor see also Van Wyck Brooks, *The Flowering of New England* (New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., 1936).

Teaching methods remained little changed during these years. The ancient languages were taught with careful attention to grammar and translation into English. Arithmetic had been relegated to the academies and high schools, and college teaching in mathematics was more free to expand. Modern languages also had strengthened their position in the curriculum, but the sciences in most colleges still were objects either of indifference or of contempt. Philosophy was taught as it had been at the first of the century, while history was still largely a matter of general outlines and of a universal character—most colleges had not established chairs, and the subject was taught by the professor of languages or of philosophy. The “social sciences” were in most institutions unknown. Library facilities were wholly inadequate—Yale had 25,000 volumes in 1860 and Williams 8,000; Brown had 10,000 in 1843. Nevertheless, the training given the student was rigorous, and his teachers rich in character and devoted to the ideal of aiding the student to secure the great aims of a liberal education. Nor was the student diverted by athletics or by social life; college life was simple and free from distractions, and those who were graduated had been trained to high ideals, intellectual earnestness, and general efficiency.<sup>49</sup>

The expense for the full four years at Harvard, everything included, was said to be about \$1,000 in the middle fifties.<sup>50</sup> The *Boston Almanac* listed as expenses at Harvard \$75.00 in college fees (tuition, library, and so on), room in dormitory \$20.00 (higher in private houses), textbooks about \$12.00; board ranged from \$2.75 to \$4.00 a week.<sup>51</sup> Tuition at Howard College was \$25.00 for the four-and-a-half-month term, while incidentals amounted to \$2.00 a term, room and servant hire to \$2.00, washing to \$1.50 a month, and board to \$12.00 a month.<sup>52</sup> At the University of Alabama (1860-61) tuition was \$52.00, room, \$8.00; laundry, \$24.00; fuel and light, \$20.00; medical fee, \$5.00; music fee, \$5.00; and servant hire, \$4.00; board was estimated at \$13.00 a month.<sup>53</sup> At Kentucky University, Harrodsburg,

<sup>49</sup> Thwing, pp. 410, 430-31.

<sup>50</sup> Everest, p. 29.

<sup>51</sup> *Boston Almanac*, 1859, p. 43.

<sup>52</sup> Boyd, p. 140.

<sup>53</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 151.

tuition was \$30.00 a session; "good board" (including fuel, lights, laundry, and other items) ran around \$3.00 a week.<sup>54</sup>

Until about 1860 the proper place for a young woman to finish her education was a "female seminary." The great day of the female seminary was from 1830 to 1860, and after 1860 the founding of seminaries in the North declined rapidly; in the South the decline was also marked, but many new ones were still chartered.<sup>55</sup> But the young woman of 1860 could go on to a women's college—to Mount Holyoke or to Elmira, for instance—or to one of the coeducational colleges, which now included Oberlin, Antioch, the universities of Iowa and Utah, and the normal classes of the university of Wisconsin.<sup>56</sup> There were women's colleges in the North, the South, and the West; by 1860 there were 61 institutions, of all kinds, where women could receive a higher education.<sup>57</sup>

There was a growth also in professional and technical schools:

In 1860, aided by a considerable endowment from a local donor, Yale began to transform its school of applied chemistry into the Sheffield Scientific School. Technological and professional education made further headway, with the establishment of the Chandler Scientific School at Dartmouth, the school of mines at Columbia University and the school of technology at Lehigh University. Colleges of pharmacy arose in Cincinnati (1850), Chicago (1854) and St. Louis (1864) to supplement those in the East. Dental schools were established in Philadelphia and New York, while medical colleges, representing one or another of the various systems of healing, came to be available in every corner of the nation. Meanwhile law schools more than doubled in number, and Columbia and the University of Michigan established more thorough courses and inaugurated a more systematic study of law.<sup>58</sup>

The Census reported 46 medical colleges, 20 law schools, 93 theological seminaries, and 17 scientific colleges.<sup>59</sup> The commission-

<sup>54</sup> Advertisement in *Lexington Observer and Reporter*, September 10, 1859.

<sup>55</sup> Woody, I, 393.

<sup>56</sup> *Ibid.*, II, 231-39; Kandel, p. 518. Vassar College, incorporated in 1861, was still in the planning stage.

<sup>57</sup> Woody, II, 147; Cubberly, p. 275.

<sup>58</sup> A. C. Cole, p. 213. Abbott Lawrence gave \$50,000 to establish a scientific school at Harvard in 1847 and left another \$50,000 at his death in 1855 (*Hunt's Merchants' Magazine*, XXXIV [1856], 666).

<sup>59</sup> *Eighth Census: Mortality and Miscellaneous*, p. 509.

er of statistics for Ohio reported that in that state alone there were 11 theological schools, 10 medical schools, and 1 law school.<sup>60</sup> But mere numbers are probably a poor index to this trend in education. The schools of medicine and law, most of them established for private profit, achieved but little; and the theological schools were characterized by a narrow denominationalism.<sup>61</sup> It seems to me, too, that the professional writers on the history of education tend to exaggerate the degree to which formal schooling in law and medicine was taking the place of the old system of study under one practicing in the profession.

Commercial "colleges" were also appearing in the fifties, chiefly in the big cities, but some of them in small towns west to the Mississippi.

*Adult education.*—While people by the thousands were attending the lyceum in order to increase their knowledge,<sup>62</sup> there were some symptoms of what later developed into a general movement for adult education.

There were numerous signs of a demand for a type of adult education adapted to the needs of the plain people. The workers in many communities had already established mechanics' institutes, which sometimes accumulated excellent libraries and offered special vocational training. In other instances, like the Albany Manual Labor University, people's colleges or labor colleges had been attempted. In 1857, through the generosity of Peter Cooper, the Cooper Union was founded at New York to give practical instruction to the working classes. At once hundreds of students came to use the reading rooms. Evening schools, successfully inaugurated in New York in 1848 by the Public School Society, were rapidly extended under the control of the board of education. Boston followed this lead in 1854 first under private, then under public, auspices. Not only were the "three R's" and other elementary subjects taught, but the instruction in bookkeeping and architectural drawing suggested a timid entry into the field of vocational training.<sup>63</sup>

<sup>60</sup> *Annual Report for the Year 1860*, p. 48.

<sup>61</sup> Cf. Sears, p. 52. There was complaint in the South that the lack of theological schools there made it necessary for their ministers to be northerners (cf. T. D. Ozanne, *The South as It Is* [London: Saunders, Otley, & Co., 1863], pp. 194-95). The same feeling of sectionalism led to the foundation of southern law and medical schools.

<sup>62</sup> See below, pp. 329-32.

<sup>63</sup> A. C. Cole, p. 215; see also Sears, pp. 51-52, for the manual-labor college experiment.

In 1852 Peter Cooper had decided to begin the erection of Cooper Union, and with this in mind he had gradually bought up an entire block at the intersection of Third and Fourth avenues. The cornerstone was laid in 1854; and by Christmas, 1856, the building was almost complete. It was finally finished in 1858, at a cost of \$630,000 for the building, and another \$30,000 for equipment and beginning instruction. The main objects of the school were: (1) free night courses in applied science, in social and political science, and in other branches of knowledge, (2) a free reading-room, art galleries, and scientific collections, (3) a school for instructing women in design and other useful arts, (4) a thorough polytechnic school, (5) the maintenance of rooms for a society to be called "The Associates of the Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art." Of these objects, only the last was not achieved. At first the Union gave a three-year, later a five-year, night course in technology. By the beginning of its second year it had 1,167 students; in 1864 nearly 1,500.<sup>64</sup>

During the Civil War there were 20,000 pupils in New York City's night schools, 8,000 in those of Philadelphia, and 1,500 in those of St. Louis.<sup>65</sup>

*Negro education.*—It is impossible to feel very certain about the status of Negro education before the Civil War. Conditions differed widely between free states and slave states, and even among the slave states themselves. Some slave states had laws against teaching the slaves but did not enforce them, while others without such laws did nothing to encourage teaching the Negroes. During the thirties widespread fear of Negro uprisings had led to the prohibition either of the education of slaves or of their assembly in Mississippi, Delaware, Florida, Alabama, and the Carolinas; Georgia had already had such laws. The western states were not so severe—Missouri did not legislate against

<sup>64</sup> Nevins, *Abram S. Hewitt*, pp. 115-80; see also "The Cooper Union for the Advancement of Science and Art," *Harper's Weekly*, V (March 30, 1861), 200.

The Cooper Union remained unique, although Boston's Lowell Lectures (below, p. 330, n. 115) did provide something of the same opportunities there.

<sup>65</sup> Fite, p. 250. Philadelphia's night school for male adults had been authorized in 1846 (Allinson and Penrose, p. 227).



schools for Negroes until 1847, and Tennessee, Kentucky, and Maryland never actually forbade them.<sup>66</sup>

There is abundant evidence that even in the states which prohibited by law the education of Negroes many masters privately disregarded the law.<sup>67</sup> There was some teaching of slaves as a reward or for their use in business. Others of them picked up reading and writing here and there—from other slaves, from white children, from secret teachers, or even in schools; some managed to educate themselves. Many white men were interested, and sometimes the masters themselves taught their slaves; in some places there were even colored schools in defiance of the law.<sup>68</sup> Stirling reported that in Richmond almost every slave child was learning to read and that even in Columbia there were hundreds who could read, twenty or thirty regularly teaching reading in the evenings to their fellow slaves for a few dollars a month. Others were taught to read by friendly whites, and on the plantations slaves taught one another.<sup>69</sup> According to Olmsted, in Virginia the Negroes had the Bible read to them a great deal; legally they were not allowed to have meetings without a white man present, but frequently they did anyway.<sup>70</sup> On the Mississippi plantation on which Mrs. Smedes lived as a girl the sons of the white family taught the few plantation Negroes who wanted to learn. On this plantation five slaves became preachers.<sup>71</sup>

Still, when all allowances have been made for such cases, most of the slaves must, like Booker T. Washington,<sup>72</sup> have received no education at all. North Carolina's law of 1830 forbade not only teaching the slaves but even giving or selling them

<sup>66</sup> C. G. Woodson, *The Education of the Negro Prior to 1861* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1915), pp. 165-69.

<sup>67</sup> E.g., Nehemiah Adams, pp. 56-57; Burke, pp. 85-86.

<sup>68</sup> Woodson, pp. 205-20.

<sup>69</sup> Stirling, p. 296. A small planter of South Carolina told Gilmore of his having been taught to read by an old Negro slave (Gilmore, pp. 246-47)—a curious reversal of the more usual circumstances.

<sup>70</sup> *Seaboard Slave States*, pp. 106-7.

<sup>71</sup> Smedes, p. 43.

<sup>72</sup> *Up from Slavery*, pp. 6-7.

books or pamphlets.<sup>73</sup> Only three states, as before mentioned, did not actually forbid the education of slaves, and even these made no public provision for their education.<sup>74</sup> The difficulties confronting a slave trying to educate himself in one of them, Maryland, are illustrated by the case of Frederick Douglass. After he had learned to read, partly through the help of a mistress despite the master's disapproval, partly through his own efforts, he tried to start a school to teach Negroes on Sunday. This was broken up, but he started another, which met secretly.<sup>75</sup> In some parts of Maryland there was such opposition to Negro education that even freed Negroes had small opportunity to learn to read and write.<sup>76</sup> There may have been local exceptions, but in all the southern states the great masses of the slaves were kept illiterate. There were some plantations with hundreds of slaves, none of them with the merest rudiments of education. In large areas it seems to have been difficult to find a Negro who could even write his own name.<sup>77</sup>

In the North each state had its own way of meeting—or avoiding—the problem. In New York, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania (except Pittsburgh, where Negroes were numerous) Negroes and whites went to the same schools. Rhode Island, Connecticut, and Massachusetts provided separate schools for Negroes, and in the other New England states there were separate schools where the Negro population was large. Ohio had separate schools; Indiana had only private and mission schools for Negroes; and in Illinois it varied with the community. Negroes had equal rights in Michigan, Wisconsin, and Iowa. In some northern states there were even schools for the higher education of Negroes.<sup>78</sup> Even where there was nominally

<sup>73</sup> G. G. Johnson, *Ante-bellum North Carolina*, p. 543.

<sup>74</sup> McDougale, *Journal of Negro History*, p. 79.

<sup>75</sup> Booker T. Washington, *Frederick Douglass* ("American Crisis Biographies" [Philadelphia: George W. Jacobs & Co., 1906]), pp. 24-25; Douglass, pp. 145-47, 171, 199-200, 264 ff.

<sup>76</sup> Levi J. Coppin wrote that, although both his parents were free, his mother had to teach him to read clandestinely (pp. 11-12, 18-19, 69-72).

<sup>77</sup> Woodson, p. 171.

<sup>78</sup> Woodson, chap. xi and pp. 244, 308-35.

education for Negroes it is difficult to know whether Negroes actually received equal treatment. Illinois, for instance, provided in 1855 that townships should spend as much on Negro education as Negroes paid in school taxes; and Ohio provided that, if the public schools did not admit Negroes, special schools should be built.<sup>79</sup> In Philadelphia, while there were 2,321 Negroes in school (1,031 in public schools, 748 in charity schools, 211 in benevolent and reform schools, and 331 in private schools) there were 1,621 Negro children between the ages of eight and eighteen not in school. Two night schools had an attendance of 150 or more.<sup>80</sup> Judging by the Census reports freed Negroes in the North had only about half the opportunity to receive an education that white people had, although there was great variation among the different states; while in the South it was next to impossible even for a freed Negro to go to school, and it was nearly as difficult for him in the West (see Appen. G, Table 59).

#### READING IN 1860

*The American newspaper.*—The relative simplicity of using statistical measurements should not blind us to the fact that education is successful only in so far as it enriches a person's—or a nation's—life. In 1860 it would have been possible to convince only a very few Americans that there was anything wrong with the accepted aims for education or that the defects in the means were more than quantitative. Perhaps the biggest reason for believing that the educational ideals were well on the way toward realization was that the American people had become—as no other people had yet become—a “reading” people. They read books (purchasing them or borrowing them from libraries), they read magazines, but above all they read newspapers. The newspaper was an “institution.” Visitors from abroad were astonished at the number of papers and at the importance attached to them. They were amazed to find that every town of 20,000 inhabitants, and many smaller, had one or two dailies, that every village had its newspaper, and even the frontier set-

<sup>79</sup> Farnum, p. 221.

<sup>80</sup> DuBois, pp. 86-87.

lements their weekly sheets, that every family subscribed to a paper, even rural families taking the local if not a metropolitan paper.<sup>81</sup> They reported that the popularity of the newspaper and its importance to the Americans were a notable characteristic of American life and that the newspaper was the "most serious of daily considerations." If these books were read and believed back home, there must have come to be a general impression that as soon as an American arose in the morning his absorption in his newspaper was shared only by his attention to breakfast.<sup>82</sup>

That the newspaper had become so characteristic a feature of American life was not alone owing to mass education; improvements in printing processes had much to do with the growth of the big metropolitan papers and their large circulations of low-priced publications. Stereotyping and printing from plates on rotary presses were commonplace, although not until the sixties did the web press, in which the paper was fed from a roll and cut by the press itself, come into use. By modern standards, it should be pointed out, the circulation of the papers of the fifties was still small and their readers few—only 64 persons of every 1,000 ten years of age and over subscribed to any sort of newspaper, and even in New York City the per capita circulation was only about a quarter of what it was in 1929 (see Table 9).<sup>83</sup>

<sup>81</sup> As it seemed to them. Actually few people in the rural regions can have seen a metropolitan paper very often.

<sup>82</sup> Baxter, p. 82; Bunn, p. 62; Chambers, pp. 203-4; Mackay, p. 292. They were less enthusiastic about the quality of the newspapers, which to their eyes were undignified, sensational, and nationalistic, with a loose tone of morality, an intolerant attitude, and an extremely low quality of editorial writing; moreover, the papers were poorly printed and were more than half advertising, much of it by quack practitioners and others of dubious ethics (cf. Baxter, p. 82; Burns, pp. 32, 66-68; Isabella Bishop, pp. 421-24; Dicey, I, 27 ff.; Mackay, pp. 291 ff., esp. p. 324; and Trollope, pp. 573 ff.). What Thomas Low Nichols had to say (I, chap. xxvi) about American papers was very similar.

<sup>83</sup> In its summaries of periodicals published in the United States the *Eighth Census* did not attempt to distinguish between "newspapers" and "magazines." It is questionable whether any clear-cut line of distinction could have been drawn: the newspapers of the day made no effort to limit their content to an impersonal and unbiased presentation of news, and the magazines were likely to concern themselves with day-to-day events. Four-fifths of the periodicals were classed as "political," the rest being "literary," "religious," or "miscellaneous"; more than three-fourths of them were weeklies. About 70 per cent of the periodicals were published in the North (80 per cent, measured by num-

Of New York's four largest dailies the *Herald*, the *Tribune*, and the *Times* sold for two cents, the *Sun* for one cent. In make-up and appearance they were a far cry from today's newspapers. Usually they were of about twelve pages, the sheets slightly smaller than at present. News which today would be played up on the front page was then to be found well inside—Lincoln's nomination might be reported on page 7—while the front page was taken up by advertisements, frequently classified ads of closely packed small type. In neither advertisements nor text

TABLE 9\*  
NEWSPAPER COVERAGE  
1860 AND 1929

	1860	1929
Average total daily circulation, all dailies.....	1,478,435	42,947,824†
Average circulation per issue.....	3,820	18,730‡
Number of subscribers to all newspapers, per hundred of population ten years of age and over.....	6.4	44.2
Circulation in New York City (present limits).....	300,000	6,384,513
Population of New York City (present limits).....	1,174,779	6,064,484

\* Source: Alfred McClung Lee, *The Daily Newspaper in America* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1937), pp. 718-31; see also the figures given in W. A. Dill, *The Growth of Newspapers in the United States* (Lawrence, Kan.: University of Kansas Press, 1928), pp. 11-30.

† Sunday excluded. Average total Sunday circulation, 29,011,648.

‡ Sunday excluded. Average Sunday circulation per issue, 50,193.

were there illustrations; and, indeed, the advertisements, being small and completely filled with printed matter, were quite different from what they later became. The large papers had united their telegraphic services to form the Associated Press in the late forties; but there was no ocean cable functioning, and foreign news came only with ship arrivals (it was printed as a series of short paragraphs in a single column, headed by some

bers of copies), and reduction of the publishing activity to a per capita basis leaves the North still far in the lead. Even the West, largely because of the amount of publishing done in California, exceeded the South in number of copies per capita. (It is to be remembered, however, that almost all the copies of the southern periodicals were purchased and read in the South, while the publications of the Northeast had a nation-wide circulation. Sectional differences in consumption would be slightly different from the differences in production.) See *Eighth Census, Mortality and Miscellaneous*, pp. 320-322.

such caption as "The Latest from Europe" or "Twelve Days from Europe"). News writing was colorless, and the vigor of the papers depended upon their editorial writing. Greeley of the *Tribune* and Bennett of the *Herald* outdid each other in their appeal to the masses, while John Vance of the *Sun* and Henry Raymond of the *Times* were a little more conservative; William Cullen Bryant and John Bigelow made the *Post* one of the country's best (as distinguished from largest) papers, and J. Watson Webb edited the less-known *Courier and Enquirer*.<sup>84</sup>

In the absence of any check on claimed circulations, the boasts of the rival editors probably need to be taken with a little caution. The *Herald*, in December, 1860, put its weekday circulation average at 77,107 and its Sunday circulation at 82,656. This, it boasted, was the largest in the world—25,000 over the *London Times*. About half the circulation was in the city and suburbs. On January 2, 1860, the *Tribune* claimed a daily circulation of 39,000, a semi-weekly of 22,500, a *Weekly Tribune* of 181,000, and a California edition of 4,500—a total of 247,000. On April 10, 1861, it boasted a daily circulation of 55,000 and an enormous weekly circulation, bringing the total to 287,750 buyers.<sup>85</sup> The *Sun* had a daily circulation of 59,000 (45,000 on Manhattan Island), the *Times* about 35,000, the *Evening Post* was approaching 20,000. There was a vigorous competition in sales,

<sup>84</sup> The best source of information is, of course, files of the papers themselves. For general discussion see Willard Grosvenor Bleyer, *Main Currents in the History of American Journalism* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1927); W. A. Dill, *Growth of Newspapers in the United States* (Lawrence, Kan.: University of Kansas, 1928); Frederic Hudson, *Journalism in the United States from 1690 to 1872* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1872); and Alfred McClung Lee, *The Daily Newspaper in America*.

I have not yet seen Frank Luther Mott's *American Journalism: A History of Newspapers in the United States through 250 Years, 1690-1940* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1941); but if it is as good as his *A History of American Magazines* it is well worth reading. See also Elmer Davis, *History of the New York Times, 1851-1929* (New York: New York Times, 1921); Frank M. O'Brien, *The Story of the Sun* (new ed.; New York: D. Appleton & Co., 1928); and Allan Nevins, *The Evening Post* (New York: Boni & Liveright, 1922).

<sup>85</sup> Of these papers two-thirds remained in New York state, 26,091 went to Pennsylvania, 24,900 to Ohio, 16,477 to Illinois, 11,968 to Iowa, 11,081 to Indiana, and 5,535 to California; only a handful went to the South—21 to Mississippi, 23 to South Carolina, 35 to Georgia, 10 to Florida, as compared, for instance, with 10,589 to Maine. Emerson wrote to Carlyle, of American farmers: "Horace Greeley does their thinking for them at a dollar a head."

and newsboys were supplemented by vendors in hotels, railway stations, and other likely locations; cities as far away as St. Louis, New Orleans, Mobile, and Galveston were regularly supplied with bundles of New York dailies.

Boston, Philadelphia, and other cities of the Northeast had dailies with large local circulations, but only the New York papers had large mail editions. Papers in the smaller cities (Samuel Bowles's *Springfield Republican* was an exception) were of local importance only. There were a few noteworthy papers in the West, such as Joseph Medill's *Chicago Tribune* and Murat Halstead's *Cincinnati Commercial* and the *Cleveland Leader*. In the more sparsely settled regions of the West, however, the typical paper was a county paper (daily, semi-weekly, or weekly), with a circulation of from 500 to 2,000. This paper, costing \$1.50 or \$2.00 a year, would probably be four pages folio, the first page made up mostly of advertising, and the other pages containing news, fiction, poetry, political editorials, agricultural information, and local items.<sup>86</sup> In any large community there was sure to be someone who subscribed to some metropolitan paper—probably Greeley's *Tribune*, though the St. Louis papers had quite a wide circulation in the Mississippi Valley.<sup>87</sup>

Southern papers were smaller, with a sectional or local appeal only; a few, such as the *Richmond Enquirer*, the *Charleston News and Courier*, and the *New Orleans Picayune*, were well edited; and the New Orleans papers, which were sent up the Mississippi in steamboats, had circulations of respectable proportions. In North Carolina the usual paper was a four-page sheet (the first regular eight-page paper was the *Greensboro Times*, with forty columns, in 1859), and there was a tendency to confine advertisements to the first, third, and fourth pages.<sup>88</sup> In Alabama the dailies were usually \$5.00 a year, the weeklies \$2.00 (in advance) or \$3.00 (deferred). Advertising took up about as large a proportion of the space as it does now, and there were few wood-

<sup>86</sup> Nichols, I, 321.

<sup>87</sup> Cf. C. B. Johnson, pp. 119-20.

<sup>88</sup> G. G. Johnson, *Ante-bellum North Carolina*, p. 779.

cuts.<sup>89</sup> The biggest Texas papers were four pages in size, tri-weekly or weekly, getting their news by way of New Orleans.<sup>90</sup>

Denver had three dailies in 1860, selling at 50 cents a week (the latest eastern papers, ten days old, sold for 20 cents each, and 10,000 were imported weekly), and there were papers in other Colorado towns. There were newspapers in Salt Lake City, a number of dailies and weeklies in San Francisco, and several papers in Oregon; there was none in the state of Washington until 1861.<sup>91</sup>

*Magazines.*—The Census of 1860 reported a total of 3,383 weeklies, monthlies, and quarterlies, of which 2,694 were "political weeklies" and 171 "religious weeklies." Frank Luther Mott thinks it fair to suppose that practically all the political and some two-thirds of the religious weeklies were newspapers.<sup>92</sup> This leaves 575 periodicals published in 1860 which can properly be called magazines. The average circulation of the quarterlies was about 3,370 copies, monthlies about 12,000, and weeklies (including newspapers) about 2,400. About a third of the periodical circulation of the country was in New York State, which received three times as many magazines as Pennsylvania, the second highest. But the sectionalism of the periodicals of the period was notable, and few had a really wide circulation.<sup>93</sup>

<sup>89</sup> Boyd, p. 208.

<sup>90</sup> See Sam Acheson, *35,000 Days in Texas* (New York: Macmillan Co., 1938).

<sup>91</sup> D. W. Working, "Some Forgotten Pioneer Newspapers," *Colorado Magazine*, IV (1927), 93-100; Hafen, pp. 120-21; Richardson, p. 297; Villard, *Past and Present*, p. 28; L. E. Young, p. 351; Bancroft, *California*, VI, 785-86; Fuller, pp. 288-89.

<sup>92</sup> *A History of American Magazines* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1938), II, 3 n. The appearance of this volume at once provides a convenient source of information about the magazines and makes extensive comment unnecessary. I am so much indebted to Mott that I have not troubled to make specific footnote references in all instances.

A more general account—and one giving no quantitative data—is Algernon Tassin, *The Magazine in America* (New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1916). There is also much useful information in Irving Garwood, "American Periodicals from 1850 to 1860" (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Department of English, University of Chicago, 1922).

<sup>93</sup> The most common subscription price was \$3.00 a year; the weekly religious and literary magazines were \$2.00, and \$2.00 monthlies were not uncommon—some were only \$1.00 or \$1.50. Such magazines as the *North American Review*, *De Bow's Review*, the *Southern Quarterly Review*, and the *Journal of Science* were \$5.00. Clubs of five or fifteen



It must be admitted that literary quality was no more a guaranty of large circulation in 1860 than it is now. The scholarly quarterlies and the best of the monthlies fared badly compared with the magazines which made no pretense about their popular appeal. Largest of them all, rumored to sell 400,000 copies weekly, was Robert Bonner's *New York Ledger*—a folio of eight five-column pages, with one woodcut an issue, selling for \$2.00 a year, or 4 cents an issue. While it did print contributions by Edward Everett, Greeley, Beecher, Bryant, Longfellow, Bancroft, Mrs. Stowe, Dickens, and Tennyson, its popularity depended on serials by such writers as Sylvanus Cobb, Jr., and Mrs. E. D. E. N. Southworth. The *Country Gentleman*, a sixteen-page quarto, with departments for farm, garden, and fire-side, in 1858 reached a circulation of 250,000 copies at a price of \$2.00 a year. Other popular weeklies (most of them Sunday papers, though not Sunday editions of the dailies) included the *New York Sunday Mercury* (a story paper), with a circulation of 145,000 before the war, the *Flag of Our Union*, which attained a circulation of 100,000, and numerous others.

Of greater interest today are the illustrated weeklies, particularly *Harper's Weekly* (circulation 120,000 by the end of 1861) and *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper* (164,000 in 1860). *Harper's Weekly*, founded in 1857, capitalized on the popularity of the older monthly. It printed pictures, politics, essays, and fiction (including serials by Dickens and others), but with an increasing number of pictures and more politics than the monthly. *Leslie's* started in 1855, and from 1857 on sold at 6 cents a copy, \$2.00 a year. Its contents were highly miscellaneous, running to large and striking illustrations. There were departments for music, drama, fine arts, the turf, sports, army life, book reviews, serial fiction (Reade, Dickens, and Miss Mulock, among others), and fashions. Sensational news events were featured from the beginning; but by the later fifties travel articles, city features, and sports were being played up more prominently. Its campaign against swill milk deserves part, perhaps all, of the

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subscriptions received lower rates: *Godey's* was \$1.65 instead of \$3.00, others were \$1.00 instead of \$2.00. Premiums had not yet become common (Mott, II, 10-13 and chap. x).

credit for the state law of 1861 making swill milk illegal. There were other illustrated weeklies, some more sensational, but only *Gleason's Pictorial*, claiming 103,000 in 1856, had a circulation greater than 100,000.

Of the monthly magazines only *Harper's New Monthly Magazine*, which began publication in 1850, achieved the 100,000 mark in circulation. It was established, apparently, to present in periodical form the wealth of contemporary English literature, in combination with house advertising. It contained stories, biographical essays, travel essays, popular articles on science, and serials; during its earlier years it pirated the popular British authors. Dickens, Thackeray, Bulwer, George Eliot, Trollope, Mrs. Craig, and others were represented in the first years, though there came to be a growing proportion of American authors. The departments were largely American and were among the most popular features of the magazine—the "Editor's Drawer," the "Editor's Easy Chair," and the "Editor's Table." In the later fifties *Harper's* was printing about fifty woodcuts a month and until 1865 two fashion pages a month. After the middle fifties most of the short stories were American, most of them "sentimental balderdash." But the circulation reached 200,000 before the war.<sup>94</sup> In contrast, *Putnam's*, which had "a real literary flavor," lasted only from 1853 to 1857, and even the *Atlantic Monthly* (1857—), with a list of contributors which included Holmes, Lowell, Longfellow, Whittier, Emerson, Motley, Norton, Trowbridge, Mrs. Stowe, Godwin, Higginson, Hale, Adrichman, Stedman, and Stoddard, had by 1863 achieved a circulation of only 32,000. And the *Dial*, despite its high standard of literary excellence, lasted only through its first year, 1860.

*Godey's Lady's Book* had a circulation of 150,000 by the war, and Godey himself estimated that he had 1,000,000 readers in 1860.<sup>95</sup> *Peterson's*, like *Godey's*, was a combination of fashions and literature. Its fashion plates never quite came up to the

<sup>94</sup> Trollope found "Harper's everlasting magazine" in the humblest cabins of the rude western country (p. 144).

<sup>95</sup> Finley, pp. 47, 177-78.

hand-colored plates of *Godey's*, but its cheaper price (it sold for \$2.00 to *Godey's* \$3.00, and was only \$1.25 in clubs of eight) gave it an edge: it probably reached the 150,000 mark sometime in the early sixties. Other women's magazines, some of them published under religious auspices, were far below these two in circulation. None of the "home" magazines could boast a large circulation, and of the "juveniles" only the *Youth's Penny Gazette* had by 1860 reached 100,000, though the *Youth's Companion*—a \$1.00-a-year weekly with numerous departments (religion, biography, natural history, highly moral fiction, and others), continued publication until recent years and is better remembered.

This was a great day for religious papers, but apart from the American Tract Society's *American Messenger* (190,000 by 1850) no one of them attained a circulation comparable to those of the magazines previously mentioned. The *Independent*, an eight-page weekly folio, was much more than a religious paper: it took a positive stand on moral and political questions, and the caliber of its contributors—Henry Ward Beecher, Theodore Tilton, Mrs. Stowe—made it universally respected. Its circulation reached 25,000 by 1856 and over 35,000 by the beginning of the war.<sup>96</sup> There were a few good humorous magazines, notably *Diogenes Hys Lanterne* and *Vaniry Fair*, but none of them lived long.

There were several periodicals devoted to scientific and medical subjects, to engineering, and to railroading (the *Scientific American* is especially interesting to the historian), and a few trade papers, most of them legal, financial, or commercial. The place vacated by the *Niles Register* (1811-49) had been more or less filled by *Hunt's Merchants' Magazine* (1839-70)—a monthly publication filled with statistical compilations, items relating to commerce, manufacturing, and trade and longer articles on business subjects. *DeBow's Review* (1846-70) was the only paper published with a purely sectional appeal which ever achieved

<sup>96</sup> Mott. A. C. Cole (p. 226) puts its circulation at nearly 100,000 in 1860, as did Burns (p. 34). Possibly they were thinking in terms of numbers of readers rather than numbers of copies.

an imposing circulation or reputation. It was filled with useful information about southern (and western) commerce and resources, modeled on *Hunt's* but never so copious. The farmer had a wide choice of magazines, some of sectional interest, some only statewide. The *American Agriculturist* led in circulation (45,000 just before the war), but the *Prairie Farmer* was popular in the West, the *Southern Cultivator* in the South. The farm papers had, besides the pages devoted to farming and farm problems, departments for fiction, children's features, religious and moral topics, and other material.

*Books.*—If we are content to use as a measure the number of newspapers and story papers read, then certainly the American experiment in mass education was proving a success. What if we regard the reading of books as a better criterion? Our usual informants, the travelers from abroad, seem to have regarded the American's addiction to his newspaper—in their eyes a cheaply sensational rag—as one more characteristic that would make good reading back home. But they were neither cynical nor superior about the American as a reader of books. William Chambers, as a publisher himself, was deeply impressed by what a Boston publisher told him:

Everybody reads and everybody buys books. Every mechanic worth anything at all, in Massachusetts, must have a small library which he calls his own; besides, the taste for high-class books is perceptibly improving. A few years ago, we sold great quantities of trashy Annuals; now, our opulent classes prefer works of a superior quality.<sup>97</sup>

It was with specific reference to the Bostonians that Alfred Bunn wrote:

They are a reading public: from the daily literature on a newsvender's counter, to the thoughtful volumes of the scholar's study, nothing escapes their attention; and to such a pitch in this determination to acquire knowledge carried, that the coachman who drives you to hear a lecture will pay his money to go in and attend its delivery. . . . In [New England] there is scarcely a village that has not some institute for the delivery of lectures, the formation of a library, and the study of various acquirements; while in all

<sup>97</sup> Chambers, p. 219. What the unnamed publisher told Chambers about Annuals was quite correct: the taste for these "gift books"—miscellanies of reprinted material, usually rather trashy, always ornately bound—seems to have disappeared during the fifties never to return.

their cities and large towns there are at least two and sometimes three. (We have been told that there are upwards of three hundred in the six States.)<sup>98</sup>

But it was not only New Englanders who read books; Count Agénor de Gasperin was amazed at the reading habits of an element of the population far removed from the literary atmosphere of Boston:

People read enormously in America. There is a library in the meanest cabin of roughly-hewn logs, constructed by the pioneer of the West. These poor log-houses almost always contain a Bible, often journals, instructive books, sometimes even poetry.<sup>99</sup>

If it is true that the Americans were great readers, this fact is of real significance, and I cannot resist the temptation to quote once more, this time from Anthony Trollope. Trollope, as an English author eager to secure American protection for British copyrights, paid particular heed to American reading habits. In his book, published in 1862, he wrote:

As consumers of literature, they are certainly the most conspicuous people on the earth. Where an English publisher contents himself with thousands of copies an American publisher deals with ten thousands. The sale of a new book, which in numbers would amount to a considerable success with us, would with them be a lamentable failure. . . .

The disposal of ten thousand copies of a work is no large sale in America of a book published at a dollar.

I do not remember that I ever examined the rooms of an American without finding books or magazines in them. I do not speak here of the houses of my friends, as of course the same remark would apply as strongly in England, but of the houses of persons presumed to earn their bread by the labour of their hands. The opportunity for such examination does not come daily; but when it has been in my power I have made it, and have always found signs of education. Men and women of the classes to which I allude talk of reading and writing as of arts belonging to them as a matter of course, quite as much as are the arts of eating and drinking. A porter or a farmer's servant in the States is not proud of reading and writing. It is to him quite a matter of course. The coachmen on their boxes and the boots as they sit in the halls of the hotels, have newspapers constantly in their hands. The young women have them also, and the children. The fact comes home to one at every hour, that the people are an educated people.<sup>100</sup>

<sup>98</sup> Pp. 22 and 29.

<sup>99</sup> *The Uprising of a Great People*, trans. Mary L. Booth (New York: Charles Scribner, 1861), pp. 60-61.

<sup>100</sup> Pp. 271 and 566.

Now, eighty years later, what can we say about the importance of books in the lives of the people of 1860? First, we can say that these people were doing more reading than were the people of any other country and more than Americans themselves had ever done before. The purchase of books was stimulated by improvements in the technique of printing, the most notable of which was the invention of electrotyping around 1850, making possible larger editions at lower unit costs. The output of American publishing houses, measured in dollars, tripled between 1850 and 1860. The output of books alone increased by 50 per cent during the first half of the decade, and an American publisher estimated that in 1856 the American people purchased \$16,000,000 worth of books published in this country and \$1,000,000 worth of imported books. A single New York publisher was turning out 3,000,000 books a year.<sup>101</sup>

Quantitative estimates of the relative number of books purchased by the different income classes or by different parts of the country are, of course, impossible.<sup>102</sup> We can be sure that more books were bought and read in the settled East than in the West, more in the big cities than in the rural communities. The big bookstores in the eastern cities served both as commercial enterprises and as gathering places for cultured customers and men of letters.<sup>103</sup> But, even as far west as Iowa and Missouri, towns large enough to be on the map usually had at least one, frequently several, bookshops. In the South the aristocratic planter prided himself on his education in the classics and on his

<sup>101</sup> *Eighth Census: Manufactures*, pp. cxxxiii, clxii; John W. Harper, "American Publishing," *One Hundred Years of American Commerce*, I, 310; S. G. Goodrich, *Recollections of a Lifetime* (New York: Miller, Orton & Mulligan, 1856), II, 387.

<sup>102</sup> Some tentative conclusions may be drawn from the census of occupations in 1860. In the sixteen northern states, 1,475 persons reported their occupations as "booksellers and stationers"; in the thirteen southern states and the District of Columbia there were only 295; and in the twelve western states and territories only 91 (*Eighth Census: Population*, pp. 658-59).

<sup>103</sup> Boston's Old Corner Bookstore was a meeting place for such men as Bronson Alcott, Dr. Howe, George Ticknor, Edward Everett, Parke Benjamin, John Lothrop Motley, and Oliver Wendell Holmes (Hildegard Hawthorne, p. 103). Emerson was another literary figure who liked to meet his friends at Boston bookstores (Van Wyck Brooks, *The Life of Emerson* [New York: E. P. Dutton & Co., Inc., 1932], pp. 96-97).

literary taste. His library was likely to be one of which an English gentleman might have been proud, although American authors were seldom represented. Apart from the planters, the people of the South were not great readers; there were few bookshops in the cities and few books in the homes. On the Frontier, while the Yankee book-peddler might sell a few sets of standard works, the home library was usually limited to the Bible, an almanac, and perhaps a few religious books and an occasional history or biography.

Our first point, then, is clear: the Americans, compared with earlier Americans or with their contemporaries abroad, were great readers. What more can we say? We need to make two very important qualifications: first, even quantitatively the record was not as impressive as it at first seems: the output of books of all kinds, including schoolbooks, can hardly have been more than a dollar's worth for each adult a year and, second, the books they read were for the most part not worth reading.

It is true that this was one of the great periods of American literature.<sup>104</sup> Books of lasting importance were being published in the fifties—by Emerson, Hawthorne, Thoreau, and Holmes, by Longfellow and Whittier, Parkman, Prescott, and Motley, by Whitman and Melville and (one should probably add) by Harriet Beecher Stowe. But none of these except Mrs. Stowe can be said to have been a best seller. The "standard" poets were widely read, but their poetry rarely achieved greatness. Though people flocked to hear Emerson lecture, as a critic he was almost unknown. Thoreau, who with Emerson really had the most to say to the people of his time (and ours) was heard by only a few. Melville and Whitman were virtually ignored. It is difficult to assess this period. Superficially, it resembles those great periods of imagination and creativeness when the great, the near-great, and the common people all react upon one another, pushing forward toward a real "renaissance." This time there was no renaissance. Perhaps people were too pre-

<sup>104</sup> See, e.g., Brooks, *The Flowering of New England*; or F. O. Matthiessen, *American Renaissance* (New York: Oxford Press, 1941). The relevant chapters of Parrington are still very much worth reading.

occupied with "getting and spending." The roots never reached down into the common people, and instead of a real growth of culture there was only a brief flowering. The period produced a large number of poems and essays which still find their way into schoolbooks, it produced a few works of beauty and power, but it produced nothing (again excepting *Uncle Tom's Cabin*) which entered into the lives of the people.

What were the people reading during the fifties? Many of them were reading Dickens' novels, which were widely pirated and more widely read; Scott also had many American readers.<sup>105</sup> Some were reading such American authors as William Dean Howells, Richard Henry Stoddard, Donald Grant Mitchell, Paul Hamilton Hayne, Henry Timrod, Thomas Bailey Aldrich, Edmund Clarence Stedman. There were a few women in the best-seller list—Susan Warner, Sarah Willis Parton ("Fanny Fern"), Catherine Lee Hentz, "Fanny Forrester," Emma D. E. N. Southworth, Anna B. Warner—and others—Alice and Phoebe Cary, Sarah J. C. Lippincott, Julia Ward Howe, Louise Chandler Moulton, Louisa M. Alcott, Margaret Fuller Ossoli, Lucy Larcom—just outside it. But what was really to the popular taste were Sylvanus Cobb's serials and the works of Peter Parley and John S. C. Abbott, which sold by the millions. The doings and sayings of Samuel Slick, Jack Downing, Q. K. Philander Doesticks, and Mrs. Partington were widely read. The year 1860 saw the beginnings of a new literary form—Beadle's dime novels and dime biographies. Within four years 5,000,000 of these paper-backed volumes had been put into circulation.<sup>106</sup>

<sup>105</sup> The lack of an international copyright convention and of any working agreement among the publishers on the two sides of the Atlantic made pirating common. Popular British books were immediately published at low prices in the United States or published serially. Thomas Low Nichols ventured the estimate (I, 340) that three-fourths of the books printed in the United States were reprints of English books. This guess seems outrageously high (S. G. Goodrich estimated [II, 388-89] that, in 1856, 80 per cent of the books published in this country were by American authors, having increased from only 30 per cent in 1820; schoolbooks probably made up 30 or 40 per cent of the total), but the persistent complaints of British authors and the caustic comments of British travelers leave no doubt as to the prevalence of pirating.

<sup>106</sup> A. C. Cole, p. 225; see also Edmund Pearson, *Dime Novels* (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1929).



When one substitutes for the literary histories a glance through the contemporary magazines with the largest circulations and another glance at the best-selling books of the time, one realizes that, for the greater part of the reading public, reading was only an escape, a time killer. For this the American methods of education may be partly to blame.<sup>107</sup>

*Libraries.*—I cannot escape the conclusion that here in the years just preceding the Civil War was potentially a renaissance which just failed of realization. All over the country there were people—probably very much in the minority numerically but enough to be a great leavening force—who were reading and talking about books, organizing and attending lyceums, interesting themselves in literary societies. They believed—believed passionately—that knowledge could enrich their lives and make their country great. No one could have predicted, in the fifties, that all these aspirations were to yield to the frenzied attempt to secure happiness through commercialized amusements and through greater possession of material goods.

There were many reasons for expecting a spiritual regeneration, and one of these was the growth of libraries. It was during the fifties that the tax-supported free library definitely established itself, beginning with the Boston City Library and libraries in other Massachusetts cities. Private donors contributed generously to these public libraries and to others, especially those for the working classes; a few libraries, notably New York's Astor Library, were given in their entirety. In a number of cities there were mercantile library associations, established by and for apprentices and wage-earners (sometimes aided by the wealthy), who were for a nominal fee entitled to the use of the library and its reading-rooms.<sup>108</sup> The proprietary libraries, most of them long established, continued to serve their members but declined in relative importance. Smaller cities and towns

<sup>107</sup> Tocqueville thought that it was characteristic of democracies that education should result in mediocrity; see also Matthew Arnold, *Culture and Anarchy*.

<sup>108</sup> The largest and most firmly established of these libraries were those in New York, Boston, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Charleston, Cincinnati, St. Louis, and San Francisco; but there were others; cf. the article on "Mercantile Library Associations," *Hunt's Merchants' Magazine*, XXIX (1853), 437-48.

continued to depend upon library associations, whose books could be used only by members but whose memberships were open to all who were willing to pay the fee.

During the decade, according to Census reports, the number of public libraries of the nation increased to over 10,000, while the number of volumes increased fivefold, reaching a total of nearly 8,000,000.<sup>109</sup> The number of completely free, tax-supported libraries was still small; and in view of that it is interesting to see that there were 48,000 common-school and Sunday-school libraries, with a total of about 8,000,000 volumes. The movement toward school-district and township libraries in the rural areas and in the western states was of recent origin, but its growth had been rapid. In 1862 there were 1,206,075 volumes in the public school libraries of New York State,<sup>110</sup> and there were district libraries in Indiana, Ohio, Wisconsin, and perhaps other states.

There are several reports on the number and size of libraries at about this time, but all incomplete. I have included in Appendix G (Tables 46-49) such quantitative data as seem most revealing, but it is to be remembered that if the reports had been complete the totals would have been larger—probably much larger.<sup>111</sup> Sectional differences are conspicuous. The North was far ahead of the South, not only in the number of libraries,

<sup>109</sup> *Eighth Census: Mortality and Miscellaneous*, p. 505. Probably part of the apparent growth is due to the greater completeness of the returns (see below, n. 111). For the growth of libraries during the fifties see Edward Edwards, *Free Town Libraries* (New York: John Wiley & Son, 1869); and U.S. Department of the Interior, Bureau of Education, *Public Libraries in the United States* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1876).

<sup>110</sup> *National Almanac*, 1864 (Philadelphia: George W. Childs), pp. 58-62.

<sup>111</sup> There is more material in the Census volume cited, in the *National Almanac*, 1864 (by A. R. Spofford, the librarian of Congress), and in William J. Rhees, *Manual of Public Libraries, Institutions, and Societies in the United States* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott & Co., 1859) than I have been able to incorporate in my tables, as well as material for a slightly earlier date—1856—in Trubner's *Bibliographical Guide to American Literature* and the *American Almanac*. Despite gaps and discrepancies, these all support such generalizations as I here make.

The student will find a critical discussion and comparison of these enumerations in a volume previously cited, *Public Libraries in the United States*, pp. 759 ff. The omissions and inaccuracies in the Census data are emphasized in the succeeding Census report (*Ninth Census* (1870): Vol. I: *Population* [Washington, 1872], pp. 472-73).

but in the number relative to the population; this superiority extended over the whole category of libraries—public libraries of all sorts, proprietary libraries and association libraries, and private libraries.

The biggest libraries were all in the Northeast. Boston's new Public Library opened its doors in 1861, when it had nearly 100,000 volumes; the Boston Athenaeum had 67,000 bound volumes, and the Mercantile Library a large collection. New York City's Astor Library had 110,000 volumes when it opened its new building in 1859; the Mercantile Library had 57,000; and there were a number of other large collections. Philadelphia's largest library had 70,000 volumes in 1858, and there were a number of smaller libraries. The state library in Albany had 52,000 books. All over the North there were libraries in the small towns and villages—libraries represented only in the statistical reports or in an occasional paragraph in a forgotten local history but which occupied a place in the life of the people hard to realize today.

The largest library south of Mason and Dixon's line was the Library of Congress, with 75,000 volumes. There were sizable libraries in Baltimore and perhaps in a few cities farther south; but these were small compared with the libraries of cities of the same size in the North, and there were few libraries in the smaller communities. Small libraries dotted the Frontier—mostly the collections of library associations—but they were all small. They do show, however, how infectious was the interest in books and libraries; and the desire to start a library as soon as the town had been planted shows how much respect for learning and how much desire to read there must have been in this period of American history.

#### LECTURES AND LITERARY SOCIETIES

*The lyceum.*—It has already been pointed out that there were but few opportunities for the formal education of adults. Indeed, it is doubtful if many opportunities could have been made available at a time when there were so few large cities and when

so many worked long hours. The thirst for knowledge was not left completely unsatisfied, however, for there was the lyceum.

On the eve of the war the lyceum reached the height of its glory despite the fact that it lacked the effective organization of a later day. Scarcely a town in the North and Middle West failed to provide a winter course of from twelve to twenty or more lectures. Here, in assemblages listening to popular discussions of literature, reform, or the achievements of science, one might see a middle class culture in process of formation. Emerson, Beecher, Gough, Greeley, Agassiz, George W. Curtis and Bayard Taylor were favorites of audiences which came together to secure instruction as much as entertainment. The doors of these "people's colleges" were open to scholars whose bold opinions excluded them from the sober presentation of higher learning, for the "home of real thought was outside, not inside the college walls," as one liberal contemporary declared.<sup>112</sup>

During the fifties the people of the United States were willing to pay a traveler-lecturer from \$50 to over \$200 a lecture.<sup>113</sup> With such fees to be had, some of the country's most famous persons were willing to lecture; nor were all of them more interested in the fees than in the good they could do. Emerson for a time gave readings in Boston's Chickering Hall afternoons, and Mondays at three o'clock he lectured at Mechanics' Hall. But Emerson's lecture tours reached far to the west, including St. Louis, Springfield, Milwaukee, and other western cities and towns. During the ten years from the passage of the Fugitive Slave Law to the Civil War he spoke constantly on subjects connected with slavery.<sup>114</sup> In January and February of 1855 Lowell delivered a series of 12 lectures on English poetry at the Lowell Institute with such success that people were turned away both afternoon and evening.<sup>115</sup> Bayard Taylor, in his first important season (1854-55) made 128 appearances at \$50 each. In May,

<sup>112</sup> A. C. Cole, pp. 215-16. Thomas Low Nichols' commentary on the popularity of lectures in America (I, 64-69), too long for quotation, is well worth reading.

<sup>113</sup> Richard Croom Beatty, *Bayard Taylor* (Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 1936), p. 146.

<sup>114</sup> Brooks, *Life of Emerson*, pp. 234-41, 249, 297.

<sup>115</sup> Edward Everett Hale, *James Russell Lowell* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1899), pp. 112-16. The Lowell Lectures were an endowment left by John Lowell, Jr., on his death in 1836. Among the lecturers it presented were Sir Charles Lyell, John Tyndall, Alfred Russell Wallace, Oliver Wendell Holmes, Lord Bryce, and others of their standing.

1856, he wrote that in two and a half years he had delivered 285 lectures and traveled 40,000 miles.<sup>116</sup> European men of letters also lectured: Thackeray, for instance, made a lecture tour of the United States in 1852, and in 1855-56 delivered his lectures on "The Four Georges."

While residents of the big cities had more frequent opportunities to hear lecturers of distinction, the local histories of smaller communities, especially those of New England, mention lecture series in great number. In what is now the Middle West, where opportunities for recreation were fewer, lecturers were received with the greatest eagerness; it is hard to say whether they were regarded more as education or as recreation, so closely were the two aspects linked. In Chicago and St. Paul the Young Men's Christian Associations sponsored lecture series, and St. Louis had two of the finest lecture-rooms in the country. In the smaller western communities the lyceum was much more informal. In one Illinois village the lyceum had weekly sessions, during cool weather, in the schoolhouse. Many villagers enrolled and furnished most of the program for themselves—mostly debates.<sup>117</sup> As far west as Iowa at least, lecture series by lecturers local or imported were given regularly. There was nothing like this enthusiasm for the lyceum in the South,<sup>118</sup> but in many southern towns there were literary and debating societies, lyceum clubs, and occasional lectures.

Dick describes the lyceum of Kansas and Nebraska:

Young and old found amusement and social events. For the most part the long winter evenings were spent listening to lectures and debates, reading at reading rooms, arranging and looking at dramatic presentations, or dancing. Discussion clubs had various names such as Lyceum, Library, and Literary Society, Debating Society, Debating School, Athenaeum, and Dramatic Association. These literary societies sprang up while the towns were in their infancy. At Lawrence, Kansas, during the first winter the Lawrence Athenaeum and Mechanics Institute was founded. When Leavenworth was only a few weeks old [1854] the *Kansas Weekly Herald* announced an open air lyceum: "For lack of other amusement, our Citizens have organized a debat-

<sup>116</sup> Beatty, p. 148.

<sup>117</sup> C. B. Johnson, chap. viii.

<sup>118</sup> Olmsted, coming from the North, was surprised at the absence of a lyceum in Norfolk (*Seaboard Slave States*, p. 136).

ing society which is held every night on the Levee in front of the *Herald* office. They have no light on the subject except that of the stars and the various camps."

At Brownville, Nebraska, there were two societies—a library and lyceum association and a debating society. Each was well patronized and grew. . . .

Some lyceums made the practice of inviting lecturers to speak on technical or abstract subjects which could not draw a crowd today. At Brownville, Nebraska, doctors from the budding young medical college there lectured on such topics as "The Bones" or "Pathology." At other times ministers, lawyers, or other men of some education lectured on abstract philosophical, political or classical subjects. During the winter of 1860 the Brownville Lyceum presented the following subjects: "Manifest Destiny," "Philosophy, Greek and Roman," "The Historian, Statesman and the Divine." The membership was one dollar for the season. In 1864 the society raised four hundred dollars to improve the building.<sup>119</sup>

In California, however, there seems not to have been the same interest in the lyceum. Mark Twain noted in the late sixties that "public lectures were almost an unknown commodity in the Pacific market."<sup>120</sup> In Los Angeles the Mechanics' Institute was started in 1859 to provide a lecture series, but it gave up when the war started.<sup>121</sup>

*Literary societies.*—Although there is no material easily accessible from which to write a summary sketch of local literary societies, something should certainly be said of them. Literary societies, debating societies, and other societies organized for cultural purposes were not limited to New England or even to the East. In Chicago there were the Mechanics' Institute, the Chicago Library Association, the Mendelssohn Literary Association, the Chicago Historical Association, and the Chicago Academy of Sciences<sup>122</sup>—this at a time when an easterner could write: "Chicago has, as we have said, with all her wealth, no public park, or other provision for outdoor recreation. She has no gallery of Art, or the beginning of one,—no establishment of music, no public library,—no social institution whatever, except the church."<sup>123</sup> Olmsted found in the little Texas town of Neu Braunfels a Mechanics' Institute, a Harmonic Society, a Society for Political Debates, and a Turners' Society.<sup>124</sup> And in

<sup>119</sup> *Sod House Frontier*, pp. 70-71.

<sup>120</sup> *Roughing It*, II, 332.

<sup>121</sup> Willard, p. 292.

<sup>122</sup> Andreas, II, 512-15; Pierce, II, 398-400.

<sup>123</sup> Kirkland, pp. 475-88.

<sup>124</sup> *Texas Journey*, p. 179.

Salt Lake City the roster included the Deseret Universal Scientific Society, the Polysophical Society, the Deseret Library and Musical Society, the Phrenological and Horticultural Society, the Deseret Agricultural and Manufacturing Society (to teach science and art).<sup>125</sup>

These little literary or debating clubs, library associations, dramatic groups, and singing societies, growing up spontaneously all over the country, give still more evidence of that desire for knowledge and for intellectual stimulation which was so much a part of those pre-war years. They, too, failed as a protection against the growing dominance of materialism in American thought, but in the fifties they did much to enrich the daily lives of their participants.

#### THE CHURCH

*The church and the level of living.*—No one who proposes to say anything about life in the nineteenth century, even purely economic life, can afford to omit from his discussion the influence of the church. The difficulty lies in deciding how to fit it in: religion touched everyday life at many points. Of the effectiveness of the church in meeting the emotional needs of the people I can say nothing here. If the church exerted any direct force upon the use of productive resources, upon the accumulation of wealth, or upon the distribution of income, those directive activities might come within the limits I have set myself; I feel, however, that such forces were too slight, too indirect, or both, to justify the detailed sort of examination they would require. But there are at least two respects in which the influence of religion is of direct concern to us: as a negative influence, the church acted as a restraint upon some of the less solemn uses for leisure time; on the other hand, the churches themselves, with the activities related to them, provided their members with opportunities for the expending of a great deal of time, energy, and money.

*The negative aspect.*—Although some of our opinions about what Puritanism was and what it stood for have had to be mod-

<sup>125</sup> Burton, p. 516.

ified in recent years, it does remain true that, at least until the latter part of the nineteenth century, people's religious views prevented many of them from going to the theater, playing cards, dancing, and indulging in various other amusements which the church (or some denominations) regarded as wicked. In the fifties this restraint was less severe than it had been. The more tolerant denominations were growing in numbers, and even among the stricter ones some good church members were finding ways of evading inconvenient restraint.

All this [religious solemnity] was softened among the Methodists, and still more among Episcopalians, Unitarians, Universalists, and Catholics. These, and the more independent of the unconverted or non-professors, indulged in dancing and other profane amusements. I have not mentioned the theatres, for there were none nearer than Boston, more than a hundred miles away, but the stage was held in holy horror. Yet pious people, who would have thought it sinful to go to the theatre to see a play of Shakespeare, would crowd the circus, just as I saw some years later, Puritanical people flocking to Niblo's to see vaudeville and the ballet, because the theatre was called a garden. Even clergymen went, with pious ladies, to see the most objectionable performances of the modern stage, so long as the place where they were given was not called a theatre.<sup>126</sup>

The restraint was less severe than it had been, but it was still severe. Certainly the theater was regarded as an abomination by the orthodox denominations. The *Independent* declared it to be "an unmitigated evil,"<sup>127</sup> and a professor of the "University of the City of New York" told Ampère that he would be in danger of losing his position if he went to the theater too often.<sup>128</sup> The prohibitions laid upon dancing and card-playing had more effect upon the greater part of the population, few of whom would have been playgoers anyway.

I suspect, moreover, that a still greater influence was the strict observance of the Sabbath. Even today many can remember childhoods in which it was regarded as sacrilegious to play

<sup>126</sup> Nichols, I, 77. A more common evasion was to call the theater a "museum" (see below, p. 354).

<sup>127</sup> March 23, 1854 (cited in Rhodes, III, 89). It would not be difficult to assemble a considerable collection of similar preachments in the religious papers of the fifties; cf. e.g., Pierce, II, 358 and 421.

<sup>128</sup> J[ean] J[acques Antoine] Ampère, *Promenade en Amérique; États-Unis—Cuba—Mexique* (Paris: M. Lévy Frères, 1860), II, 14.



any games, to go hunting or fishing, even to stroll in the country or to read anything except the most serious and moral of books. Since for much the greater part of the population Sunday was the only day of leisure for the working members of the family, the only day the whole family could spend together, this restraint upon their gaiety must have been a sore trial to all but the most devout.

*The positive aspect.*—The statistics on churches in the *Eighth Census*, though imperfect, provide the simplest approach to this topic. Even if there were no churches other than those included in the Census, there was one church to every 580 persons (men, women, and children, free and slave, church members and non-church members). These churches averaged \$3,189 in value and had an average capacity of 354 persons—they could seat more than 600 persons for every 1,000 of population.<sup>129</sup>

These over-all figures obscure significant sectional differences. There was no great difference in number of churches (or in aggregate accommodations) per thousand of population throughout the settled part of the country, but the differences in the size and value of the churches are quite apparent. Churches in the North were larger than those in other sections (the average capacity was 372, compared with 329 in the South, 300 in the West), and the average value much higher (\$4,100 in the North, compared with \$1,730 in the South, \$2,650 in the West). The churches of Rhode Island had the highest average value in the country (\$10,672), followed by those of Massachusetts (\$10,115), Connecticut (\$7,922), and New York (\$6,643); the four states of New York, Pennsylvania, Massachusetts, and Ohio had churches with an aggregate property value higher than that of all those in the rest of the country. Of the southern states only Louisiana (\$5,525), Maryland (\$5,400), and Delaware (\$3,840) appear to have had very costly churches, although the 68 churches in the District of Columbia averaged about \$14,000 in value. The other southern states ranked much lower, with Arkansas, having an average value of \$464 a church, the lowest

<sup>129</sup> *Mortality and Miscellaneous*, pp. 497-501.

of all. The western states and territories show a more conspicuous variation among themselves. That Utah had only 21 churches, but these with an average value of more than \$41,000, is—although one cannot be certain of complete comparability in the reports—due to its peculiar religious situation. The high value of religious property in California (averaging \$6,325 a church) may be due in part to the inclusion of mission properties. Elsewhere in the West the average value of church property ranged from \$4,600 in Washington down to \$111 in Nebraska.

Denominational differences are closely linked to sectional differences in property values. The Unitarian church had the highest average value (\$16,433); and, while it was not a large denomination, it was relatively strongest in New England, where church-property values were in general high. Of the large denominations, the Catholic church had the highest average value (\$10,500), and the states in which the Catholic church had a large membership had, in general, a high average value of church property—Massachusetts, Louisiana, California, Washington, New Mexico. The average value of their churches is a good clue to the economic status of their members. In order, the other leading denominations were: Episcopal (\$10,100); Congregational (\$5,970); Presbyterian (\$4,787); Lutheran (\$2,531); Baptist (\$1,764); Methodist (\$1,664); and Christian (\$1,212).

*The denominations*—It was characteristic of religious life in the United States that there were a number of denominations, each appealing to persons of a certain intellectual, social, or economic status. In his book on the Americans, Nichols called attention to this proliferation of denominations.

In America, every town of five or six thousand people is likely to have five or six different religious societies, called churches. The distinction of church and chapel is unknown. Formerly, those who are called Dissenters in England, talked of their meeting houses. Now, every place of worship, except those of the Friends, or Quakers, is called a Church. A village of five thousand inhabitants may have an Episcopal church, belonging to the American daughter of the Church of England, a Roman Catholic church, and Presbyterian, Baptist, Methodist, Unitarian, and Universalist churches.<sup>130</sup>

<sup>130</sup> I, 64-65.

The Roman Catholic church, though still smaller in membership than the Methodists, Baptists, or Presbyterians, was growing rapidly. Between 1825 and 1850 nearly a million and a half Irish Catholics arrived in America, and by 1856 the Catholic population in the United States had reached close to 2,500,000. The Episcopal church maintained its social prestige but, while growing in absolute numbers, was falling behind the other denominations in rate of growth; it failed to attract many new members in the democratic West. The Presbyterian church continued strong in all sections of the country, though troubled with occasional secessions. The Cumberland Presbyterians, with a membership of 100,000, were strong in the South, but not to the exclusion of the parent-denomination. The Congregational church was increasing its influence as New Englanders settled the West; one of the country's most famous preachers, Henry Ward Beecher, was a Congregationalist.

The largest denomination of all was the Methodist church, with a membership of 1,000,000 in the North, and in the South 500,000 white and 250,000 Negroes. The Baptist churches continued to display a strong frontier influence, and, with the Methodist churches, had the greatest appeal for the Negro, freed or slave. By the close of the Civil War the Negro Baptist membership was estimated at 400,000. The Disciples of Christ, a comparatively new denomination, was growing rapidly, having a membership of nearly 500,000 by the end of the Civil War. And the Lutheran church, following the German and Scandinavian immigration into the West, grew to nearly 250,000 in 1860.<sup>132</sup>

*Churches.*—Among the show places of New York were Trinity Church, St. Paul's, Grace Church, the Fifth Avenue and South Presbyterian churches, the First Baptist, St. Peter's Roman Catholic and St. Patrick's (the present St. Patrick's was begun

<sup>132</sup> The Census gave no statistics on church membership, but the aggregate capacity of the churches of the various denominations may serve as a rough index. The leading denominations, on this basis, were: Methodist (6,259,799); Baptist (3,749,553); Presbyterian (2,088,838); Catholic (1,404,437); Congregational (956,351); Episcopal (847,296); Lutheran (757,637); Christian (681,016); Union (371,899); German Reformed (273,697); and the Friends (269,084). Only the main branch of each denomination is included.

in 1858), the Reformed Dutch, and the French Protestant Episcopal. Trinity had, by 1860, lost to Grace Church its place as the most fashionable church; the sexton of Grace Church had, incidentally, made himself invaluable as the social arbiter of the city. In Brooklyn, sightseers were shown Holy Trinity and the Church of the Pilgrims. Boston, Philadelphia, Chicago—these and many other cities had imposing churches, costing up to \$120,000 each, their pews renting for good round sums (in Beecher's Brooklyn church, pews rented for as much as \$175). Nor was preaching in the North all done in the churches. Popular preachers spoke at Sunday services in auditoriums and theaters and made every effort to attract large congregations of those without church membership.

Churches in the South ranged from Baltimore's stately edifices to the rude log meeting-house not far away, in Virginia, which Olmsted attended.<sup>132</sup> Many North Carolina congregations were in 1860 still using crude structures erected a hundred years before, some of brick or stone, but most of them very humble in appearance.<sup>133</sup> Throughout the South the greater number of churches were small and crudely built,<sup>134</sup> although the city churches were bigger and, if not costly, at least impressive by their dignity.

Plantation Negroes usually had preaching on or near the plantation, and most planters encouraged their religious aspirations or at least did not stand in their way. Frequently the preacher was white, or a white person was present, to make sure that there was no preaching of insurrection, but seldom were the laws against assembly invoked to prevent the Negroes from having religious services. In the cities and towns there were Negro churches, and many of the white churches had Negro branches, either meeting in the afternoon or sitting in the rear or the balcony at the regular service.

In the West few of the churches were at all pretentious. The

<sup>132</sup> *Seaboard Slave States*, p. 88.

<sup>133</sup> G. G. Johnson, *Ante-bellum North Carolina*, pp. 435-36.

<sup>134</sup> Cf. Mallard, chaps. x-xi; Gilmore, p. 180; Parsons, pp. 23, 111; Burke, pp. 147-48, and Letter V; Olmsted, *Seaboard Slave States*, pp. 451-61.

best of them were barnlike meeting-houses, usually Methodist. Sometimes the villagers built their own church, which was heated by a box stove and lighted by candles; sometimes the school-house was used for Sunday services. There were no musical instruments to accompany the singing and but few hymnbooks—the hymns were lined out as they had been in New England in earlier days.<sup>135</sup>

*"The Great Awakening."*—In the early part of 1858 a spiritual quickening was perceptible throughout the country. In nearly every city there was a large, daily union prayer meeting, and other prayer meetings were held in private houses, in stores and shops, and in theaters.<sup>136</sup> Sunday night services were held in New York's Academy of Music, with its capacity of four thousand, and there was Sunday evening preaching also in the National Theater in Chatham Street.<sup>137</sup>

More characteristic of the Great Awakening than these city services were the revivals and camp meetings in the rural areas, in which tens of thousands of conversions were reported. The whole South was in the stir of religious excitement, and throughout the South and West these meetings were eagerly awaited and participated in with enthusiasm.<sup>138</sup> Such tent meetings were of more than temporary importance, for, as they won converts, meeting-houses began to dot rural districts thickly and served not only for worship but for all sorts of community affairs—temperance rallies, singing-schools, evenings of public speaking—some of which were later held in the public schools when they were built.

*Religious activities.*—We may be sure that the regular Sunday worship services affected more people than did any of the other church activities. Even in the big cities the church service provided a regular meeting place for friends and acquaintances, a chance for conversation and gossip. For many it was almost the

<sup>135</sup> C. B. Johnson, pp. 68-73; cf. MacBride, *passim*.

<sup>136</sup> See A. C. Cole, pp. 252-55.

<sup>137</sup> *Harper's Weekly*, III (January 1, 1859), 4, 6, and (January 22, 1859), 51.

<sup>138</sup> See Burke, Letter XXIX (Georgia camp meetings); Long, pp. 157-60 and 224-29 (slave camp meetings and revivals); MacBride, chap. xxx (Iowa revivals). Nichols' description of revivals and protracted meetings is particularly good (I, 78-82).

only social life they had, a chance to forget their work and their humdrum daily lives and perhaps to obtain a welcome escape in a common emotional release. In small towns and rural communities the church was still more important to its members. The church service was frequently the only public gathering in the community for weeks at a time. In the sparsely settled districts of the South and West, where preaching was usually held only once or twice a month, people sometimes walked seven or eight miles to attend.

Closely associated with the church were the missionary societies and the ladies' aid societies. The ladies' aid, especially, provided an excuse for the women to meet in one another's homes, and while they were sewing or quilting they could be finding relief from household drudgery in talk. For many women such informal gatherings as these must have been the brightest spots of their daily lives. The ladies' aid, the social functions of the church itself, would certainly bulk large in any description of social life in the fifties.

Serving as social functions as well as sources of revenue were the church fairs, dinners, oyster suppers in cold weather and strawberry lunches in June, benefit performances by lecturers and by musicians such as Ole Bull, tableaux and amateur theatricals, although the last were condemned by the evangelical groups as stumbling blocks "over which sinners were eternally ruined." Some few of the more liberal churches such as the Unitarians and Swedenborgians went even further and held "social" dances to care for depleted revenues. Of all these, donation parties for ministers were perhaps the most popular, for they served as expression of affection for a spiritual leader as well as providing for his support. Gifts ranging from money and watches to potatoes and shoes represented far more than their intrinsic worth. These were especially welcome to the minister's family when, as was occasionally the case, they proved to be the chief return the pastor received if he preached in a poor parish.<sup>139</sup>

An Englishman, passing through Indianapolis in the fifties, was amazed at a census showing that only 32 of the 1,920 children in that town were not attending Sunday school.<sup>140</sup> The census may be viewed with a certain skepticism, but the fifties were active years for Sunday-school workers. Each denomination was eager to build up its Sunday schools, and the American

<sup>139</sup> Pierce, II, 358-59.

<sup>140</sup> Wilson, p. 243.

Sunday School Union, working with the various denominations, had hundreds of missionaries in its service.

In the South and West, at least, "quarterly meeting" was looked forward to with pleasurable anticipation, and "protracted meeting" was held every winter. The camp meetings were attended by people from the whole countryside, who during the few days of their meeting could renew old friendships and make new ones, talk about crops and politics and about their neighbors, as well as participate in the emotional excitement of the religious meetings.

Nor were the churches interested only in themselves and their own members. The Southern Baptist Convention had been organized in 1845. To 1861 it had "sent forth 750 missionaries, added 15,000 members to the churches, built about 200 houses of worship, and had collected and disbursed about \$300,000." Its Foreign Mission Board had many missionaries in China and Africa. In 1860 it had 24 stations and churches, with 18 pastors and 1,258 members, in the Liberia region. The American Baptist Missionary Union (of the northern church) had in 1850 an income of \$118,726.35. It had been active in Sweden since 1855, in France since 1832, in Germany since 1834, in other European countries, and in Burma, Assam, India, and China. The American Baptist Home Mission Society, organized in 1845, in the year 1860-61 had receipts of \$55,000. Other denominations were similarly active. The Home Missionary Society of the Congregational Church had receipts of \$183,000 in 1860-61; and the same denomination's foreign-mission board had expenses of \$323,000, having then 29 missions, 124 stations, and 20 outstations, with a staff of 370 missionaries and 346 native helpers. The missionary receipts of the Methodist church, home and foreign, amounted to \$270,000 in 1860; the New School Presbyterian Church's receipts for foreign missions were \$80,000 in 1860; those of the Old School, \$137,000. The American Home Missionary Society, organized in 1826 by the Presbyterian and Reformed Dutch churches, had in the later fifties 986 ministers supplying 1,965 mission pulpits.<sup>141</sup>

<sup>141</sup> A. H. Newman, *A History of the Baptist Churches in the United States*, Vol. II of *American Church History* (New York: Christian Literature Co., 1894), pp. 455, 460,

The American Bible Society, formed in 1816 and possessed of a new building in Astor Place in 1851, split in 1859. The New York society in 1860-61 had receipts of \$389,000; during that year it issued 700,000 Bibles and Testaments. The American Tract Society, dating from 1824, in 1861 received \$93,000 in donations, issued 6,700,000 pages of tracts, and had in the fifties an average of 1,050 distributors. In many frontier regions the colporteur provided almost all the new additions to the farmer's scanty store of literature and brought him some measure of contact with the outside world. The American Sunday School Union employed 350 persons in 1856, and in 1859 established more than 2,000 new Sunday schools, while visiting and helping nearly 4,000. The American and Foreign Christian Union, organized in 1839, worked chiefly in Catholic countries.<sup>142</sup> These statistics indicate something of the magnitude of missionary endeavors in the fifties, and it must be remembered, too, that such societies as the American Seamen's Friend Society did much work that was essentially of a missionary nature.

All these figures on church membership, missionary activity, and the like, can have meaning only as suggestive of something more fundamental lying behind them. They reflect a religious faith and a devotion to good works which must have given a meaning to the lives of many, if not most, of the population. The things I have been talking about in this chapter—the belief in education and the zest for acquiring knowledge, faith in a personal God and a zeal for doing his work—go far in explaining why the Americans of the fifties were free from the feeling of hopeless futility now so pervasive. It is not the whole explanation, of course. Another reason was that few people in the fifties had enough time on their hands to have an opportunity for boredom and cynicism. The amount of leisure they did have and what they did with it require a chapter to themselves.

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471-73; A. H. Newman (ed.), *A Century of Baptist Achievement* (Philadelphia: American Baptist Pub. Soc., 1901), p. 184; Fite, pp. 302-4; "American Benevolent Societies," *Harper's Weekly*, I (May 16, 1857), 316-18.

<sup>142</sup> Fite, pp. 301-2; "American Benevolent Societies," pp. 316-18.



## CHAPTER XII

### LEISURE AND RECREATION

#### THE AMOUNT OF LEISURE TIME

*Leisure and the level of living.*—I have left until the last what I have to say about leisure and its uses because, from a certain point of view, leisure is a residual. Food, clothing, and shelter and whatever else may be regarded as “necessities” must be produced before the economy can afford its workers time for idleness and recreation. Once technological progress and the accumulation of capital have reduced the number of hours a week required to produce these essential commodities, it is a matter of choice whether the time saved be used for leisure or for the production of more goods. Since in practice both the amount of leisure and the output of commodities have increased, it is safe to assume that most workers prefer to take part of the gain in spare time, part in a larger consumption of goods. But, since additional leisure is to be obtained only at the expense of goods and additional goods only at the expense of leisure, leisure itself must be considered as a “good” and consequently as entering into the level of living.

*Hours of labor in 1860.*—During the two decades just preceding 1860 the working day had been shortened somewhat, though the amount of reduction differed markedly among the various occupational groups. From such information as can be obtained, it appears that the average working day, apart from farm labor, was something like 11 hours a day—but there were a good many occupations for which this could not stand as typical.<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Tables 43 and 44 in Appen. G give some idea of the differences in the length of the working day for different employments and the numbers working longer or shorter days than the average. The available compilations of data on the length of the working day are largely identical with those on wages (Appen. B). The greatest amount of data is contained in the Bureau of Labor Statistics publication, *History of Wages in the United*

For skilled trades the 10-hour day seems to have been almost standard in 1860, at least in the East. Unskilled labor, employed outside factories, was likely to work 10 hours a day also. Railroad labor usually worked 10 hours a day, seven days a week (New York's street-railway employees worked 12 hours a day, seven days a week); miners also about 10 hours a day.

New England's textile mills offered a sharp contrast to these hours: the 11-hour day would seem to be fairly typical, though there were numerous factories, especially in Rhode Island, where the working day was much longer.<sup>2</sup> In machine shops and in iron and steel mills the working day was shorter than in textile mills—frequently 10 hours, sometimes 11, occasionally longer. In the "sweated" trades the hours were still longer: the *New York Tribune* went so far as to estimate that New York City's shirt-sewers worked 20 hours a day.<sup>3</sup>

There is hardly enough information to justify generalization as to the hours worked in retail trade. The Aldrich Report put the hours of dry-goods clerks and grocery clerks at 11 a day, but the data were too few to insure their being representative. The *New York Tribune* put the hours of those working in New York

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*States from Colonial Times to 1928*; but it is not presented in such a way as to lend itself to summary statement or tabulation.

<sup>2</sup> "In 1853 eleven hours was adopted in many parts of the country as the work-day, apparently for the purpose of heading off the ten-hour movement. In some places the factories continued to be run on the old hours until about 1865, when the eleven hour system was adopted, as the result of strikes" (George E. McNeill, *The Labor Movement* [Boston: A. M. Bridgman & Co., 1887], p. 121).

In Massachusetts the 10-hour movement failed to achieve its aims during the fifties but did succeed in getting important concessions. In five industrial towns, during 1852, machine-shop hours were reduced to 11, and even before that many had been reduced to 10. In Worcester, in 1853, the 10-hour day was "all but universal." In the height of the 10-hour agitation, in 1853, even the great textile factories reduced their average hours to 11 (Farnum, p. 266). According to the *Annual Report for the Year 1885* of the Massachusetts Bureau of Labor and Industries, the 10-hour day in textiles was, in 1885, still considered a recent innovation, though it had been the rule in the "mechanic trades" since not many years after 1840 (p. 166). In New Hampshire, beginning about 1860 the machine-shop employees, dyehouse hands, pickers, and dresser hands were working 10 hours a day, all other mill operatives 10½. There had been a continuous downward trend since 1830, when the working day had been 14½ hours (New Hampshire Bureau of Labor, *Annual Report for the Year 1894* [Concord: Edward N. Pearson, 1894], p. 459).

<sup>3</sup> *New York Daily Tribune*, cited by Hunt's *Merchants' Magazine*, XLII (1860), 750.

City at 14 or longer, and in Chicago the clerks in the mercantile establishments in the middle of the decade also usually worked about 14 hours a day, although in 1855 the leading grocers announced an eight-o'clock closing hour during the winter, and some shoe dealers and clothiers adopted the same closing hour except for Saturdays.<sup>4</sup> Bakers, according to the *New York Tribune*, worked 17 hours a day.

Employees on federal public works were put on a 10-hour day in 1840, and the 10-hour day continued standard until 1868. Those engaged on city public works, according to the Aldrich Report, worked somewhat longer hours—10.4 hours a day on the average.

More than half the working population was still employed in agricultural labor, and there the trend toward shorter hours had not yet become evident.<sup>5</sup> In the North and West the usual day was from sun to sun—say 12 hours a day as a year-round average—which was no shorter than the hours worked by the Negro slaves in the South.<sup>6</sup>

For the population as a whole the hours of labor had dropped from about 12½ hours a day previous to 1830 to 11 by 1870. By 1850 at least a third were working only 11 hours a day.<sup>7</sup> Besides the reductions in hours, there were probably more days taken off for holidays and for vacations than there had been earlier. But there was still little leisure time in which the laboring man could enjoy himself, and, apart from the southern planters, there does not appear to have been much of a disposition on the part of those who could afford leisure to avail themselves of it. Businessmen found their chief enjoyment in working or, if they

<sup>4</sup> Pierce, II, 173-74. In the same year the barbers tried, unsuccessfully, to have the city council legislate against their Sunday employment.

<sup>5</sup> But note the comment in the *New York Daily Tribune*, May 5, 1860, that farm hands were beginning to insist on a 10-hour day.

<sup>6</sup> See the testimony in Starnes, pp. 495-503. Sunrise to sunset was the usual working day for slaves, but frequently with 2 or 2½ hours for dinner. Some of the hands working on tasks would finish their day's work by three or four o'clock in the afternoon, although this cannot have been common.

<sup>7</sup> Charles Edward Lindblom, "The Growth of Leisure Time in the United States as Affected by Decreasing Hours of Work for Those Gainfully Employed" (unpublished MS), pp. 56 and 58.

did not actually enjoy it, at any rate felt lost outside their offices. Thomas Low Nichols wrote:

In no country are the faces of the people furrowed with harder lines of care. In no country that I know is there so much hard, toilsome, unremitting labour: in none so little of the recreation and enjoyment in life. Work and worry eat out the heart of the people, and they die before their time. . . . It is seldom that an American retires from business to enjoy his fortune in comfort. Money-making becomes a habit. He works because he has always worked, and knows no other way.<sup>8</sup>

*Vacations.*—I have found no explicit information bearing on the number of people who could take vacations, with or without pay, but I have the very definite impression that only the few could enjoy this luxury. My only evidence is of a negative sort—none of the contemporary writers said anything about members of the working classes taking vacations, and that is just the kind of thing they would have written about if they could have.

The extension and improvement of railway lines and their steamboat connections made it possible for Americans to travel widely in comparative comfort. That they made use of their opportunities is attested by the number of European visitors who commented on the Americans' urge to travel. According to the Countess Pulszky, society people in summer habitually deserted the cities for country seats on the Hudson or made a trip to Europe or more often went to Saratoga or some other watering place. Ladies made frequent excursions to Mobile and New Orleans.<sup>9</sup>

Many sightseers went to Niagara Falls (not yet the special tour for honeymooners), where the hotels catered to vacationists and the "Maid of the Mist" carried passengers to the very vortex of the falls. Others went to Trenton Falls or to the Catskills and to the White Pine Mountains of New Hampshire. Some went camping in the northern woods, and more venture-some travelers traveled over the newly completed railroads to

<sup>8</sup> Nichols (1874 ed.), p. 206.

<sup>9</sup> Pulszky, I, 67. Transatlantic travel was certainly too expensive for any but the affluent—cf. such advertisements as that in *Harper's Weekly*, II (March 27, 1858), 207, for a pleasure voyage up the Mediterranean on the steamer "Ericsson" at a fare of \$750.

the Great Lakes and the upper Mississippi. As part of what George Catlin designated as the "Fashionable Tour," the upper Mississippi attracted tourists from the East who stopped first at St. Louis, then went by steamboat to Rock Island, Galena, Dubuque, Prairie du Chien, Lake Pepin, St. Peters, and the Falls of St. Anthony, back to Prairie du Chien, and then to Fort Winnebago, Green Bay, Mackinaw, Sault Ste Marie, Detroit, Buffalo, Niagara, and back east again.<sup>10</sup>

The fashionable spent the summers at a spa or at an acceptable seaside resort. At Saratoga, Newport, Old Point Comfort, Nahant, and similar resorts vacationists could live at luxurious hotels and spend their days in driving, playing billiards or bowling, bathing, and lounging. In the evenings there were frequent band concerts, balls, and parties. At Saratoga there was a good deal of racing and gambling. Cape May, Atlantic City, Long Branch, and Coney Island were less fashionable and less expensive. Wealthy southerners had long been conspicuous for their patronage of the northern resorts; but in the fifties the growth of sectionalism kept many of them away and stimulated the rise in popularity of the various Virginia springs and Carolina resorts. In Kentucky there were also a number of taverns and watering places which attracted resorters, and new resorts in the Gulf regions of Mississippi were acquiring prominence.

While only the wealthy could take long trips or live at resorts, short excursions, particularly holiday excursions on steamboat or railroad, were popular all over the country. All through the summer there were steamboat excursions, costing only 25 or 50 cents, from New York City to near-by points and more expensive rail excursions to the Pennsylvania coal fields and elsewhere. Other northern cities, located on water or rail, had their own facilities for excursions. Along the Ohio and the Mississippi excursions were especially popular—for the Fourth of July, for Sunday-school outings, for picnics, for outings of any sort. Other steamboat excursions were longer. In 1857 the "Henry Clay" and the "Northern Belle" brought pleasure parties north from St. Louis and Dubuque and gave a grand ball for the prin-

<sup>10</sup> Petersen, pp. 250-51.

cipal citizens of St. Paul while in that port. The "Harmonie," the "Rescue," the "Rosalie," the "Orb," the "Sam Young," the "Conewago," the "Denmark," and the "Key City" were only a few of the steamboats carrying excursionists on the upper Mississippi that year.<sup>11</sup>

*Holidays.*—In contrast with Europe and particularly with the Catholic countries, there were few general holidays in the United States. What few there were, were made festive occasions. There was more of the genuine holiday spirit in the celebration of the Fourth of July than of any of the others. Coming in mid-summer, it could be made the occasion for outdoor events of all kinds, and there were no religious associations to make it in any way an austere observance. Newspaper accounts indicate a good deal of similarity in Fourth of July celebrations over the country. Boston's, in 1860, included a parade, concerts, an oration by Edward Everett, a regatta, fireworks, and other features. Only the regatta was at all distinctive—the patriotic oration, the parade, the fireworks, the concerts, were all part of the traditional observance of the day. New York City made preparations for an elaborate program; and, while in Philadelphia there was no official program, there were all sorts of activities by military companies and other societies and excursions to the seashore, to Bethlehem, and to the West. In Chicago the day opened with a salute by the Chicago Light Artillery at day-break. There were the usual parade and rail and boat excursions.<sup>12</sup>

In smaller localities the celebration could not be on such a grand scale, but the festivities were participated in with even greater enthusiasm. Always there was the oration; and, if there were any military companies, volunteer fire companies, or other uniformed groups, there was sure to be a parade. It was a day for family picnics, and those who took their dinners to the

<sup>11</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>12</sup> *Boston Evening Transcript*, July 2, 1860; *New York Herald*, July 4, 1860; *Philadelphia Press*, July 4, 1860; *Chicago Daily Tribune*, July 4, 1860. (See also Pierce, II, 471. She describes the usual Chicago celebration as including oratory, fireworks, dances, excursions, picnics, baseball games and horse racing, balloon ascensions, salvos of booming cannon and ringing of church bells, military drills and reviews.)

square could listen to the bands and the oratory and at night see the fireworks. Still smaller villages celebrated as best they could, with powder discharges in anvils or in holes bored in logs, and at night with homemade fireworks.

There were few other real holidays in the North. Christmas was still a solemn day, though traces of gaiety were beginning to creep in. It was Thanksgiving which in the North occupied the place Christmas did in the South—a day of huge family dinners, sociable gatherings, and good fellowship. New Year's Day, in the big cities, was traditionally a day upon which the fashionable men, leaving their wives at home to receive, spent the whole day calling at the homes of their friends; sometimes they accepted liquid refreshment at each stop and ended the day in a condition which may easily be imagined. I have found no indications of any more general observance of New Year's. Certainly New Year's Eve had not come to be regarded as a time set apart for general revelry.

The South, having little of the North's austere attitude toward idleness, required a much slighter pretext for taking a day off. Washington's Birthday was almost always celebrated, but a day commemorating some national political victory, or even the completion of a railroad, was frequently made the excuse for a holiday. Funeral ceremonies for national figures or local celebrities were public occasions. The celebration of the Fourth of July was much like that in the North. There was usually a reading of the Declaration of Independence and an oration, and there were sure to be barbecues and picnics. There were teas and concerts, and the public school exercises might be part of the program. In the evening there was usually a subscription ball. The southern Christmas is so much a part now of the American tradition that any description seems unnecessary.<sup>13</sup> On the plantations the whole holiday period, lasting through New Year's, might be free from work.

<sup>13</sup> The flavor of the southern Christmas is captured in such contemporary short stories as W. Gilmore Simms, "Maize in Milk"; in reminiscences such as Avirett's (chap. xxiv); and in such later accounts as that of Thomas Nelson Page, *The Old South* (Plantation ed.; New York: Scribner's, 1912), pp. 208 ff.

The barbecue was almost, if not entirely, peculiar to the South. When the barbecue was spontaneously got up merely for the fun it provided, it might be furnished by one person or by a group; there were no invitations and it was understood that the whole community was welcome—men, women, children, and Negroes. The slaves arrived in the morning, bringing (if it was a large barbecue) perhaps a wagonload of young pigs, two or three lambs, and generous amounts of whisky and wine. The carcasses were roasted whole in pits, over live coals. While preparations were being made, there was an hour or two for friendly intermingling, with games, stories, and conversation. Then the eating began in earnest, and after the white folks had done their best the Negroes were left to eat what remained. The political barbecue was almost equally enjoyable, but at the expense of the aspiring candidate.

In western regions the Fourth of July was typically celebrated with formal programs, with huge public dinners, and with great balls to which the entire countryside came. There were ball games and other athletic events, horse races, and frequently informal celebrations of a more convivial character. Christmas and Thanksgiving seem to have been observed only with family dinners and religious services.

#### MUSIC, DRAMA, AND THE ARTS

*Opera and concert.*—Americans had not yet displayed any great interest in opera. Except at New Orleans, opera consisted of short seasons by imported troupes, and all attempts to establish opera on a permanent basis had failed (they did not succeed, for that matter, until the building of the Metropolitan Opera House in New York City in 1883). Opera, in these short seasons, did become a regular feature of the social life of New York, Boston, Philadelphia, New Orleans, and perhaps of Chicago and San Francisco; and other cities were occasionally visited by touring companies presenting Italian opera or opera in English.<sup>14</sup> During the early fifties the rival companies headed

<sup>14</sup> German opera was first performed in 1859 but did not immediately attract any following.



by Mme Marietta Alboni and Mme Henrietta Sontag competed for public favor, although Grisi and Mario were the most popular singers. Later in the decade the rivalry was provided by the companies of Ullman, Maretzek, and Strakosch, and in 1859 the young Adelina Patti made her debut and leaped into immediate popularity. Boston, New York, Brooklyn, and even Milwaukee built new academies of music during the decade, but even low prices (usually seats were priced at from 25 cents up to perhaps \$1.50) failed to make opera popular.

Most of the big cities and some of the smaller ones had orchestras, but with few exceptions they were partly or wholly amateur, and none gave really finished performances. Boston's "Musical Fund Society" presented concerts from 1847 to 1855 and the "Boston Philharmonic" from 1855 to 1864, with seats sometimes \$1.00, sometimes \$2.50 for a series of six. New York City's "Philharmonic Society," dating from 1842, had, by 1860, 80 members and 1,800 regular subscribers and was presenting regular concerts at \$1.50 a seat. Its concerts, however, were infrequent and its members rather lacking in proficiency. Philadelphia's "Musical Fund Society," which had been organized in 1821, disbanded in 1857, leaving the city without an orchestra. Chicago's first orchestra of symphonic proportions was reorganized in 1860 to present its first season in 1860-61. In the smaller northern cities traveling groups supplemented programs by local amateurs, but there was little such musical activity in the South. Two chamber groups—the Mendelssohn Quintet Club (Boston) and the Mason-Thomas Quintet (New York)—gave concerts in their home cities and in others.

By far the most prominent of the soloists who toured the country before the Civil War was Jenny Lind, who under P. T. Barnum's management gave recitals in all the large cities along the Atlantic coast and completed her tour by singing in the cities along the Mississippi and the Ohio. No singer since her time has created anything like the furor she did; but throughout the fifties there were other soloists of prominence touring the country—the child prodigy Adelina Patti and other opera stars in off-seasons, the pianist Louis Gottschalk, the violin-and-

piano team of Henri Vieuxtemps and Sigismond Thalberg, Ole Bull early in the decade, and others. The Negro slave, Blind Tom, was a popular performer in the South.

While one can find indications of a yearning for the "finer things" in the musical annals of the fifties, the actual achievements were slight. The names of some of the performers are carefully preserved in the histories of music, but there were few really capable concert artists, and they were but poorly patronized. The orchestras were of a caliber which would not be tolerated today, and their programs, like those of the soloists, distinctly "popular" in their appeal.<sup>15</sup> Nor, except for Stephen Foster, were there any American composers whose works have lived.

*Music by amateurs.*—It would be overhasty to dismiss music in this fashion. There were not enough wealthy people to subsidize musicians, and the common people had too little time and money to support them. If music was to enrich the lives of the people, it had to be music which they themselves created. Here the period was not so barren.

It was in choral organizations that the musical spirit of the time found its fullest development. Boston's "Handel and Haydn Society," with a continuous history from 1815, was perhaps the best and certainly the best-known singing society, but there were splendid choruses in New York and Philadelphia and similar groups in towns and cities throughout the North. Many of them gave public concerts, singing oratorios and other music, sacred and secular, with some degree of regularity. The German members of the population had their own singing societies wherever there were enough of them to make up a chorus and did much to stimulate an interest in music. Even in villages and small towns there were choral groups who found their evenings of singing together a pleasant relief from the usual monotony. Such little, informal, groups as these were to be found in all

<sup>15</sup> "It is hard to realize now how untrained the musical taste of most Americans was a century ago. At one of Ole Bull's recitals a man in the audience set up a demand for 'Yankee Doodle'—and the violinist with a smile complied" (George Frisbie Whicher, *This Was a Poet* [New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1939], p. 56).

parts of the country, and in all parts, too, rural communities had singing schools to which people came for miles around for an evening of singing and sociability.

The extent to which people provided their own music in their homes can only be guessed at. Nichols believed that there were ten pianos in every American town and village to one in England and commented on the number of bands and amateur musical organizations.<sup>16</sup> Probably every small town, in the North at least, had its group or groups of instrumentalists who met to play together for their own amusement and to give an occasional concert. Emigrants to the West carried their musical instruments with them, to make the weary days of travel less tedious and to make life more enjoyable in the pioneer regions for which they were bound. Although the South failed to distinguish itself in its patronage of music and the arts, the planters who adhered to the country-gentleman tradition had musical instruments in their homes, and singing and playing by members of the family among themselves and for the entertainment of their guests were not uncommon. Despite such indications, however, I do not have the impression that anywhere in the country was there much of that love for music which finds its realization in the making of music within the family circle.

*The legitimate theater.*—It needs to be pointed out at the very beginning that the theater of the fifties was in function totally unlike that of today. Far from being small theaters catering to class audiences, the houses were large, and the bills were chosen for their appeal to the masses. The theater then occupied more the place of today's moving picture than of today's legitimate theater, and, as is now true of the movies, runs were very short.<sup>17</sup> Even so, there is testimony to the effect that the American theater was not flourishing, and that Americans went less often to

<sup>16</sup> I, 396; cf. C. B. Johnson (p. 81), who says that there were practically no pianos or cottage organs in Illinois. The Census of 1860 (*Manufactures*, p. clxvi) reported a production for the year of 21,797 pianos and 12,643 melodeons.

<sup>17</sup> The mass, rather than class, appeal of the theater of the middle of the nineteenth century is a seemingly obvious fact which the historians of the theater have ignored. It is well brought out in Foster Rhea Dulles, *America Learns To Play* (New York: D. Appleton-Century Co., Inc., 1940).

the theater than did Europeans.<sup>18</sup> One reason for this, especially in the North, was the lingering tendency to regard the theater as immoral—a tendency responsible for theaters in Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, and perhaps other cities masquerading as “museums.”

The general run of plays in the fifties were second-rate comedies, farces, melodramas, musical shows, extravaganzas, and burlesques; even to see a Shakespeare play at one of the better theaters one had to sit through comic songs and variety acts sandwiched between the acts.<sup>19</sup> The plays most performed were such melodramas as *Ten Nights in a Barroom*, *The Drunkard*, and *Uncle Tom's Cabin*. Of a somewhat higher order were the works of British playwrights, contemporary and earlier, with a considerable sprinkling of Shakespeare.

Judged on the basis of quality of performance, the period was neither brilliant nor barren.<sup>20</sup> During the decade theatergoers

<sup>18</sup> Cf. Hancock, p. 98; Phillippo, p. 98; Pulszky, II, 240.

<sup>19</sup> Dulles.

<sup>20</sup> There are many histories of the theater, although almost without exception their scope is limited to the more prominent plays and players of the metropolitan theaters. Among them are Oral Sumner Coad and Edward Mims, Jr., *The American Stage* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1929); Mary Carolina Crawford, *The Romance of the American Theater* (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1913); Ruth Crosby Dimmick, *Our Theaters: Today and Yesterday* (New York: H. K. Fly Co., 1913); Arthur Hornblow, *A History of the Theater in America* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Co., 1919), Vol. II; Laurence Hutton, *Plays and Players* (New York: Hurd & Houghton, 1875); Lewis C. Strang, *Plays and Players of the Last Quarter Century* (Boston: L. C. Page & Co., 1903), Vol. I.

For local histories and special topics see: Kate Ryan, *Old Boston Museum Days* (Boston: Little, Brown & Co., 1915); Eugene Tompkins, *History of the Boston Theater, 1854-1901* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1908); George D. Willard, *History of the Providence Stage* (Providence: Rhode Island News Co., 1891); T. Allston Brown, *A History of the New York Stage* (New York: Dodd, Mead & Co., 1903), Vols. I and II; Joseph N. Ireland, *Records of the New York Stage, from 1750 to 1860* (New York: T. H. Morrell, 1866-67); Fritz A. H. Leuchs, *The Early German Theater in New York, 1840-1872* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1928); Ralph Hartman Ware, *American Adaptations of French Plays on the New York and Philadelphia Stages from 1834 to the Civil War* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1930); Henry P. Phelps, *Players of a Century: A Record of the Albany Stage* (Albany: Joseph McDonough, 1880); Arthur Herman Wilson, *History of the Philadelphia Theater* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1935); James Napier Wilt, “The History of the Two Rice Theaters in Chicago from 1847 to 1857” (unpublished Ph.D. dissertation, Department of English, University of Chicago, 1923); Joseph S. Schick, “Cultural Beginnings and the Rise of the Theater, German and American, in Eastern Iowa, 1836-1863” (unpublished Ph.D. dis-

could see such actors and actresses as E. A. Sothern, Edwin Booth, Edwin Forrest, Charlotte Cushman, Laura Keane, John Gilbert, William Evans Burton, and William Warren (each of whom had his supporters for the claim of being the greatest actor in comedy roles, as had Booth and Forrest in tragedy), E. L. Davenport, Lola Montez, and Maggie Mitchell. Dion Boucicault, who had come to the United States in 1854, figured as playwright, producer, and actor. Macready had retired in 1851, Keane made no appearances in the United States between 1845 and 1866, and Rachel, after appearing in this country in the middle of the decade, died in 1858. Joseph Jefferson, later to be famous for his "Rip Van Winkle," gave only a few performances during the fifties, and spent much of his time abroad.

The more prominent actors made tours of the country, during which, supported by the permanent companies of the theaters in which they played, they appeared in Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Baltimore, Charleston, Savannah, Mobile (with perhaps a side trip to Havana), and New Orleans, then up the Mississippi and back by way of the Ohio or the Great Lakes. Smaller cities might or might not be included. Runs of any one play of more than a few days were exceptional, so the stars and companies had to have large repertories.

Generalization as to the physical characteristics of the theaters is difficult. For some time previous to 1850 there had been little building of new theaters; and the theaters at the beginning of the decade were most of them old and dilapidated, built in the traditional English fashion, with pit, parquet, and boxes (the pit was either without seats or was provided only with

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sertation, Department of English, University of Chicago, 1937); Alfred Henry Nolle, *The German Drama on the St. Louis Stage* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1917); Lucile Gafford, "Material Conditions in the Theatres of New Orleans before the Civil War" (unpublished M. A. Thesis, Department of English, University of Chicago, 1925); George D. Pyper, *The Romance of an Old Playhouse* (Salt Lake City: Seagull Press, 1938); Joseph Gaer (ed.), *The Theater of the Gold Rush Decade in San Francisco* ("California Literary Research Monographs," No. 5 [California Emergency Relief Association]); Constance Rourke, *Troupers of the Gold Coast* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, & Co., 1928).

Reminiscences and biographies of those connected with the theater of the fifties also contain much relevant material.

crude benches and in some theaters had only the bare ground for a floor). Despite the building of new theaters during the fifties, with more comfortable seats, more pleasing interiors, and more convenient arrangements, many of these older theaters continued in use. Admission prices were fairly uniform throughout the East—50 cents for the boxes and parquet, 25 cents for the family and upper circles. The less fashionable theaters charged as little as 12½ cents.

New York City was the center of theatrical life; and in 1860 there were perhaps a dozen regular theaters offering dramatic entertainment there, with capacities up to 3,000 persons. Broadway had already superseded the Bowery as “the” street for theaters, and the old Bowery theaters were presenting blood-and-thunder melodramas at low admission prices.<sup>21</sup> Broadway theaters were presenting such bills as *The Octoroon*, Jefferson, Sothern, and Laura Keane in *Our American Cousin*, Edwin Booth and Edwin Forrest in Shakespearean and other plays, and stock companies and stars in a great variety of offerings. There were also theaters presenting French and German drama. Boston had only three or four theaters; but one of them, the Boston Theater, erected in 1854, was perhaps the finest in the country. They, too, had a variety of bills, with stock companies and prominent stars. Philadelphia had two or three regular theaters, but in the latter fifties the Arch Street Theater had things pretty much its own way.

There were permanent theaters in all northern cities as far west as Chicago and St. Louis. Some were pretentious in appearance, some were not; but the system of traveling stars made it possible for theatergoers in Providence, Albany, Pittsburgh, Cincinnati, Chicago, and other cities to see the same actors in the same plays that were featured in New York. In cities with a large German population there was sure to be at least one German theater, though the line of distinction between the theater and the beer garden would not always have been easy to draw.

<sup>21</sup> For the degeneration of the Bowery theaters see Asbury, *The Gangs of New York*, pp. 23 ff.

While several cities in the South were regular or occasional stops for actors on tour, except in New Orleans the theaters appear to have been few and antiquated and the theatrical life undistinguished. As in the smaller towns of the North, the theater ran more to amateur theatricals and to second-rate companies on tour. But New Orleans did have two or three excellent theaters, and its seasons were as brilliant as those of the East.

In the frontier regions there was sometimes a theater, more often not, and such performances as were given took place in improvised halls. There were amateur theatricals, strolling companies of varying merit, and, along the Mississippi, showboats. A number of theaters were built in San Francisco during the fifties, some of them elaborate in decoration and equipment; but by the end of the decade legitimate drama had almost completely disappeared, as the popular taste turned to "variety" bills. Elsewhere in California there were few regular theaters, but dramatic companies, some good and some bad, made the rounds of the towns and camps.

Many of those who considered the theater immoral could permit themselves to hear plays read, nor was the popularity of readings limited to those who did not attend plays. One of the most popular of those who gave readings was Fanny Kemble, who had retired from the stage much earlier but whose appearances in Boston and other large cities found appreciative audiences at a dollar and more for a series of, for instance, six readings from Shakespeare,

*Amateur theatricals*—No one has yet collected any material bearing on the history of the amateur stage, and it remains buried in the hundreds of local histories. One cannot look at many of these histories, however, without concluding that little theaters and dramatic groups, often connected with literary and debating societies, were to be found in almost every community. Giving their performances in school buildings or small halls, with improvised costumes and properties, they—like the musical and literary organizations—provided an excuse for coming together and gave added interest to the lives of young people of village and country. In towns and cities they had more to work

with, but they can hardly have given so much real enjoyment to participants and spectators.

*Art and art museums.*—Of the painters of the fifties only Inness and the Hudson River School are still remembered, unless Morse—whose fame as an inventor has called attention to his failure as a painter—be included. Of the sculptors, Powers and Greenough, both living in Italy, achieved some degree of fame; and a few people have heard of Clark Mills.

If there was no great art in America, neither was there any great interest in art. There were few museums in 1860, and most of these were either small or were merely nondescript collections of curios.<sup>22</sup> There were several historical societies with collections of various sorts in New England and south as far as Maryland. A few of the colleges had natural-history collections resulting from state geological surveys; a few natural-history societies also had collections open to the public. Destined to become the best-known museum in the country was the Smithsonian Institution, erected 1847-56; but the transfer of specimens from the Patent Office did not take place until 1858, and it was some time before the Smithsonian collection was large enough to attract many spectators. Museums like Barnum's in New York attracted many customers, the museums in connection with some of the theaters may have interested some of the play-goers, and the traveling museums of various sorts probably were well patronized throughout the country. There were no zoos.

There were no public art museums before 1870, although Charleston had made an effort to start a collection in 1858.<sup>23</sup> The Pennsylvania Academy, founded in 1826, survived; and New York's National Academy of Design (a school) had annual exhibitions. The Wadsworth Athenaeum had a picture gallery in 1842; and in the fifties the Brooklyn Institute had a gallery.

<sup>22</sup> See Laurence Vail Coleman, *The Museum in America* (Washington: American Association of Museums, 1939), I, 8 ff.

<sup>23</sup> Coleman, pp. 14-15. There was talk of the need for public galleries in such diverse publications as the *Scientific American* ("Public Art Museums," II [February 11, 1860]), 106, and *Godey's Lady's Book* ("Art in America," LXII [March, 1861], 269-70).



Yale's Trumbull Gallery, which in 1832 was the first college art museum, was followed by others in the fifties, like those at Harvard and Michigan. New York's Gallery of Fine Arts, originally private, was taken over in 1858 by the New York Historical Society, and the city also acquired, sometime after 1853, the Bryan Gallery of Christian Art (a collection of old masters).<sup>24</sup> In 1860 Yale acquired the James Jackson Jarves collection of the best Italian paintings. An occasional museum had a picture gallery, and in the larger cities, particularly New York, there were private galleries, and there were more or less regular exhibitions in other cities. There were a few good private collections, such as those of H. C. Carey and W. W. Corcoran; but, while Corcoran had given the city of Washington an art gallery for which ground was broken in 1857, it was not used as such until fifteen years after its completion.

#### POPULAR ENTERTAINMENT

*Variety and minstrel shows.*—Negro minstrels and variety (vaudeville) shows helped more people pass away their time than did the legitimate theater. Innumerable small houses in the cities presented shows of the sort, and communities which had little or no opportunities to see plays were frequently visited by troupes of variety performers. It is my impression that there were few towns so small or so isolated as to have no opportunities to see magicians, jugglers and acrobats, burlesque companies, traveling museums, panoramas and dioramas, travelogues, and other entertainers. From time to time a celebrated dancer might tour the country, and ballet troupes made regular appearances in the cities. Music halls, from the lowest of dives to semi-respectable "concert saloons," gave those in the cities opportunity to be entertained while quenching their thirst. Balloon ascensions attracted thousands of spectators in all parts of the country, and Blondin, the ropewalker, thrilled many by walking his way over Niagara Falls and by other feats.

The Negro minstrel-show craze was at its height in the fif-

<sup>24</sup> In 1860 this was at Cooper Institute (*New York Daily Tribune*, March 10, 1860).

ties.<sup>25</sup> New York City had at least ten halls or theaters in which minstrels held forth—there were three companies within a few doors of one another on Broadway. Except in the summer months, Boston was never without at least one minstrel troupe during 1860, and sometimes there were two; Philadelphians also could take in a minstrel show almost any week during the season. Cincinnati, Chicago, and other cities had frequent engagements by minstrel shows, and smaller towns had opportunities to enjoy the same entertainment at less frequent intervals, while the showboat "Banjo" presented minstrel shows up and down the Mississippi. A dozen or more troupes covered all parts of the country from the Deep South to New England and the Old Northwest, and in California minstrel shows were frequent and popular.

Variety shows (the term is properly vague) were as widely distributed as minstrel shows. Permanent companies and strolling troupes presented all sorts of musical entertainment—dances, burlesques, pantomimes, slapstick comedy, and all the other acts that make up the vaudeville program. "Family" troupes were received with particular favor, and one of them—the Ravel family (a "family" of some forty persons)—enjoyed long engagements in the leading theaters of the country. There was a host of individual performers, from magicians to Shakespeareans, to augment the list.

Bostonians, during 1860, could attend the occasional variety programs at the Boston Theater, operettas and other light musical programs, equestrian shows, magicians, "Thioden's Museum of Art,"<sup>26</sup> ventriloquists, the Ravels, "Captain E. C. Williams' Celebrated South Sea Whaling Voyage," summer promenade concerts by Gilmore's Band, and similar entertainment at admission prices usually 25 and 50 cents and sometimes as low as

<sup>25</sup> See Brander Matthews, "The Rise and Fall of Negro Minstrelsy," *Scribner's Magazine*, LVII (1915), 754-59; Carl Wittke, *Tambo and Bones* (Durham, N.C.: Duke University Press, 1930); and Laurence Hutton, "The Negro on the Stage," *Harper's Magazine*, LXXIX (1889), 131-45. Advertisements for minstrel shows are to be found in the newspapers of almost any town large enough to have a paper.

<sup>26</sup> A traveling collection of paintings, allegorical representations, models of machines and of cities, and other miscellanies.

15 cents.<sup>27</sup> New York had half a dozen or so fairly pretentious houses presenting variety entertainment and any number of small and transitory "theaters" and "music halls." There were the usual menageries, "parlor operas," band concerts, and fireworks. There were some music halls—I hesitate to say "respectable" but respectable at least by contrast with others—where such entertainers as Sam Cowell and Adah Isaacs Menken were featured; other places offered entertainment of a more dubious sort, with admission prices of a few cents or even with no charge except for drinks. Some of these were of the lowest order, frequented by men only, where the "waiter girls" coaxed patrons to buy drinks. There were numerous beer gardens where the German members of the city's population flocked with their families to drink beer, listen to music, and perhaps enjoy a farce or some other entertainment. Philadelphia also had its music halls, equestrian troupes, magicians, "parlor operas," and other entertainment, at the usual prices.

Cincinnati had numerous beer gardens in its German section, and its theaters presented magicians, ventriloquists, panoramas and dioramas,<sup>28</sup> ballet troupes, traveling museums, and similar fare. Sam Cowell was there in 1860 and the Ravel family, and there was a permanent variety theater charging 10 and 20 cents admission. All over the West—Detroit, Chicago, Galesburg, Davenport, Keokuk—people had a chance to see and hear Swiss bell ringers, family troupes, magic-lantern exhibitions (the stereopticon came later), clairvoyants, readers, jugglers, magicians, singers, impersonators, entertainers of all sorts. Mississippi

<sup>27</sup> The only source of information for such entertainment is newspaper advertisements, with occasional comment by travelers, brief mention in popular magazines, and passing reference in local histories. It is particularly difficult to find out much about the smaller music halls and concert saloons, which collectively probably had more patrons than did those one can find advertised or described.

<sup>28</sup> Antiquarians have apparently taken little interest in the "panorama," which was the movie of its day. The panoramas were long stretches of painted canvas which were unrolled before the audience, sometimes as illustrations for a lecture, sometimes as the entire entertainment. A panorama might require from one to two hours for its complete unrolling, and collectively they included all conceivable subjects—scenic, dramatic, educational, religious, even comic (see Schick, pp. 107, 134-41). Newspaper advertisements show their popularity, especially in the smaller communities of the West, where any sort of entertainment from the outside was received with avidity.

River showboats presented drama ranging from *Hamlet* to *Ten Nights in a Barroom* and lighter entertainment of a wide variety. Even remote villagers could see occasional traveling showmen with their wagonloads of curios, electrical demonstrations, and other novelties.

In the South, predominantly rural and sparsely populated, there was less of this sort of entertainment. New Orleans had a permanent variety theater, and Mobile, Louisville, Lexington, and other cities were visited by entertainers and traveling companies. Even Texans could see such entertainment occasionally.

San Francisco had a galaxy of small halls, upstairs and below stairs, newly built as tiny melodeons or transformed from small theaters—variety was so popular that heavier drama had almost vanished. Lotta Crabtree was one of the most famous performers. Prices at the best of the variety shows were 50 and 25 cents.

*The circus.*—The circus was becoming a big business in the fifties.

A new era for the American circus and its patrons arrived with the increasing tendency toward consolidation and as more modern facilities were adopted. The smaller troupes traveled the dusty roads of midsummer, but Spaulding and Rogers's new railroad circus with nine cars of its own proclaimed that "team horses and wagons won't do in this age of steam," that its unrivaled entertainment would go "wherever there is a track or a steam boat." At the beginning of the decade [of the fifties] the show was advertised as the "People's Circus"; a few years later it was a "European circus, comprising the elite of the European circuses." When the Civil War came Spaulding and Rogers were operating on the Mississippi in a "Floating Palace" which was seized by the Confederates at New Orleans and converted into a military hospital. One of its rivals, E. F. and J. Mabies' Grand Olympic Arena, combined with Nathan's circus to secure more favorable consideration from the public. In the early fifties Barnum's Grand Colossal Museum and Menagerie toured the country attracting thousands although critics denounced the show for not coming up to the promises of the posters. Later accretions made it one of the dominant shows on tour. In further keeping with the age of steam, the calliope made its appearance to herald the presence of one or another of these numerous claimants to being "the greatest show on earth."<sup>29</sup>

The big circuses toured the country from New England to Iowa and throughout the South, carrying with them elephants,

<sup>29</sup> A. C. Cole, pp. 196-97.

lions, tigers, leopards, giraffes, bears, camels, and other animals, as well as all sorts of human performers. Wherever they went, they were the high spot of the year; and the circus parades brought a touch of the exotic even to those who could not afford the fifty or twenty-five cents it cost to get in. Floating circuses on the Mississippi reached many towns along the river, and there were little circuses reaching even the towns of Kansas and Nebraska, and California.

*Commercialized sports.*—There was no professional baseball until a decade or so after 1860; if there was any really popular "spectator sport," I suppose it was horse racing. Throughout the North (except for New England, where only the more disreputable element went to races) all the cities had their racecourses, where meetings were held at least one season each year.<sup>30</sup> In the South, where the planter aristocracy prized horses highly, there were jockey clubs for the socially élite in Virginia, the Carolinas, and at New Orleans. Some California cities had jockey clubs and racecourses.

Professional prize fighting—then a brutal, bare-fisted spectacle lasting many rounds—attracted many spectators despite the efforts of the legal authorities and of outraged public opinion to stamp it out. Fights were disguised as excursions to the country or were held secretly. Some important matches were held just across the Canadian boundary and drew thousands of customers. When John C. Heenan, the American favorite, met Tom Sayers, the British contender, in England, the match became the most popular topic for masculine conversation; newspapers and the illustrated weeklies exploited its public interest with many illustrations and with many columns of description.

Some sports were even more frowned upon by society than was prize fighting. Such, for instance, was cockfighting, and the pitting of wharf rats against one another and against terriers or fights between dogs and woodchucks or coons. All these had to be staged somewhat furtively; but they seem to have had

<sup>30</sup> This is a matter of such general knowledge that any citations would be superfluous. I do wish to call attention to Henry Murray's description of the races held at Long Island and at Philadelphia (pp. 21-24, 235-37), because he gives so much of the flavor and atmosphere of the time.

some sort of following, in Boston and New York, in the South, in California, and in all parts of the country.

Bowling and billiards, though not spectator sports, would probably come under the head of commercialized sports, since they were most often carried on in "saloons" operated for profit. Bowling was popular among all classes from the most fashionable down. There were alleys at resorts, in all cities, and even in many villages; the newest settlements on the Frontier quickly acquired the requisite facilities. In the larger cities and in the watering places there were bowling alleys for women. In billiards an "American School" had grown up, combining some of the features of the French and English systems, and the popularity of the game had increased rapidly. There were hundreds of "billiard saloons," in all the towns of the country,<sup>31</sup> and some of the wealthy had tables in their own homes. Weekly magazines had regular columns for billiards enthusiasts.

*Public dance halls.*—In many parts of the country dancing was still regarded as sinful and vicious. This meant that the better element did not patronize the dance halls (the well-to-do, of course, did their dancing at private balls and parties), and I suspect that, since these places were frequented only by the less reputable, while the respectable people would not approve of them in any case, most of them must have been vulgar in decoration, music, and behavior. Unfortunately, I have seen no descriptions of the general run of dance halls—the denunciations by outraged clergymen are not very informative—but there seem to have been many such halls in all the larger cities from New York to the Mississippi.<sup>32</sup> In the South, especially in the seaport towns, there were public dance halls, frequently of a low order, while in the mining settlements of Colorado and

<sup>31</sup> By the mid-fifties \$30,000 a year was reported paid by Chicago patrons for the use of billiard and gaming tables (Pierce, II, 432). The more strait-laced looked upon bowling, billiards, rifle contests, and match games as at best a waste of time and a demoralizing influence. This was especially true if they were carried on in connection with liquor saloons, as they frequently were.

<sup>32</sup> Chicago had 80 public dance halls, according to its ministers (quoted in Carl Sandburg, *Lincoln: The Prairie Years*, II, 338-39).

Oregon there were "hurdy-gurdies," where the miners could dance with professional partners.

Members of the staff of the Five Points House of Industry investigated some of the dance halls frequented by the poorest of New York's poor. One, in the Five Points near Cow Bay, was a "low, damp, dingy basement, twelve feet wide by thirty long, and six feet six between joists." It was overcrowded by "persons of all ages and complexions"; and the smoking during dances contributed to the stifling atmosphere. Another was a room eight feet square, four steps below ground, to which the admission was two shillings. Down another four steps was a room twenty-four feet square and ten feet high where persons of all ages and conditions were dancing to a violin and tambourine. In St. James Street there was a large German dance hall, filled to suffocation with sailors, landsmen, and abandoned women. The whole area was full of halls of the same sort—the investigators visited at least forty, they reported.<sup>33</sup> But such dives cannot have been the typical metropolitan dance hall.

#### UNCOMMERCIALIZED AMUSEMENTS

*Outdoor sports.*—This was not a period in which athletics were very highly regarded. No one, according to the historian Rhodes, walked when he could ride; no one took exercise in the open air; the trotting buggy took the place of the horse's back; athletics were almost unknown.<sup>34</sup> Edward Everett said, in 1856:

There is no lack of a few tasteless and soulless dissipations which are called amusements, but noble, athletic sports, manly out-door exercises, which strengthen the mind by strengthening the body, and bring men into a generous and exhilarating communion with nature, are too little cultivated in town or country.<sup>35</sup>

Gratton found the games played by American boys tame beside those of English boys. Rounders, hockey, and football were only lazily played; there was no cricket, despite recent attempts

<sup>33</sup> *Monthly Record of the Five Points House of Industry*, Vol. I, No. 6 (October, 1857).

<sup>34</sup> Rhodes, III, 71.

<sup>35</sup> *Orations and Speeches*, III, 407, quoted in Rhodes, III, 71-72.

to introduce it, no golf, no hurling, no running, jumping, or vaulting, no fox-hunting. In winter the boys' favorite sport was sliding down hill on improvised sleds, instead of snowball fighting or skating.<sup>36</sup> Other English visitors were similarly struck by the lack of games and sports or of any interest in outdoor life.

Although attempts had been made to introduce cricket from England, the game never became really popular. There were a few cricket clubs, and there were enough followers of the game to make possible matches between local clubs and international matches with British and Canadian teams—the international matches with England in 1859 were notable—but the sport failed to appeal to many Americans.

What later became the "national game" of baseball was in 1860 still in transition. As "town ball" and other variants; it was played by boys and by the rougher element among the men, usually on cow pastures and without gloves or suits. In the early fifties it began to take on the characteristics of modern baseball; amateur clubs were organized as far west as the Mississippi (in Kansas and Nebraska it was still only a children's game), national conventions were held, and rules standardized. By 1860 there were a number of well-organized clubs, a few touring the country, and thousands of spectators were being attracted to games. But not for another decade was there any professional baseball, and only in 1859 did intercollegiate baseball get started. There was no intercollegiate football until 1869, although in the fifties there was some playing of the game, usually involving a rough-and-tumble fight. Yale and Harvard even banned interclass football games, and only in one or two other colleges was any football played. In some parts of the country, boys seem to have played a sort of football among themselves.

Ice skating was one of the most popular sports in the North. "This sport was one of the few that required little instruction from Old World customs. Popular with old and young and with both sexes, advocates of women's rights seized upon it as a means of ushering in the new day; some found it an excellent argument for the bloomer costume."<sup>37</sup> "Everybody in good soci-

<sup>36</sup> Gratton, II, 313-14.

<sup>37</sup> A. C. Cole, p. 188.



ety skates in Boston," said *Harper's Weekly* in 1859, going on to say that Boston's skaters were better than those of New York.<sup>38</sup> In 1861 the same magazine remarked: "Six years ago skating was an amusement peculiar to school-boys in the country; it is now an amusement universal and of every age." Not only were there places to skate in Boston, but there were "skating parks" in such places as Roxbury (\$2.00 would admit one for the season),<sup>39</sup> and special excursion trains carried 1,000 or 1,500 Boston skating enthusiasts to Jamaica Pond and other near-by waters.<sup>40</sup> In New York

the ladies flock in great numbers to the Fifth Avenue Pond and Central Park to skate. Here you may see all the fashion and beauty of the city, watching or taking part in the healthy sports. In the Central Park (which is free for admission) from twenty thousand to sixty thousand persons may be seen. The Fifth Avenue Pond is situated between 58th and 59th Streets, and is more select, by reason of the charges, which are five dollars for gentlemen and two dollars for ladies.<sup>41</sup>

Mrs. Cowell, on a January day when the temperature was 2° below zero, saw nearly 7,000 persons in Central Park, 3,000 or 4,000 of them skating.<sup>42</sup> Roller skates of a crude sort were being advertised, but roller skating did not become at all popular until the sixties.

Another favorite winter sport in the North was sleighing—"the great equestrian feature of New England."<sup>43</sup> In good skating weather, according to Pairpont, it was not unusual to drive to some hotel or house at a considerable distance and after a dance or a chat and supper to return by moonlight. During the severe winter of 1856 several couples were frozen to death while on long sleigh rides.<sup>44</sup> In Boston parties clubbed together to hire a sleigh. A first-rate sleigh, for which the charge might be thirty

<sup>38</sup> "Skating at Boston," *Harper's Weekly*, III (March 12, 1859), 174.

<sup>39</sup> *Harper's Weekly*, V (January 19, 1861), 35.

<sup>40</sup> John A. Kouwenhoven, *Adventures of America, 1857-1900* (New York: Harper & Bros., 1938), No. 23.

<sup>41</sup> Batcheler, pp. 103-4. In an article entitled "The Athletic Revival" (*Harper's Weekly*, IV [January 28, 1860], 50), the praise of skating is illustrated by a picture of the skating in Central Park.

<sup>42</sup> Disher, p. 241.

<sup>43</sup> Bunn, p. 25.

<sup>44</sup> Pairpont, pp. 56-57.

or forty dollars, could accommodate thirty-five or forty persons and would be drawn by from six to twelve horses; its interior would probably be lined with black bearskins, and rugs and wrappers were provided.<sup>45</sup> While sleighing is usually thought of as a rural and small-town sport, in 1860 the busiest street of the greatest metropolis was popular for sleighing:

Broadway, while the snow reigned supreme, was one continued exhibition of unchecked gaiety. The hotels vied with each other in fitting up splendid *cortèges*, magnificently appointed for the use of their guests. The omnibus lines, discarding wheels, put their long ships on runners. . . . Private sleighs of all sorts and sizes, belonging to everybody and nobody . . . filled up the interstices. . . . The sidewalks, meanwhile, were lined with an admiring crowd. . . . As night approached, the revel reigned supreme, and then were added to the glare of snow, the blaze of gaslight, the jostling multitude, the innumerable turnouts, a constant singing of song, of wit, and repartee—the population of the great American metropolis forgetting care, stocks, hard times, and “jordan,” agreed to be happy in Broadway.<sup>46</sup>

In contrast, boating, which required not only a boat but a place to row or sail it, was a sport for the few. Harvard, Yale, and a few other eastern colleges were beginning to take rowing rather seriously; class clubs owned their boats, and intercollegiate matches were held with some regularity. The wealthy were taking an interest in yachting: there were yacht clubs in New York, Brooklyn, Jersey City, Chicago, New Orleans, in North Carolina, and probably elsewhere. The “America’s” defeat of British yachts in 1851 gave added interest to yachting; and, although it required post-war prosperity to make it anything like a popular pastime, the illustrated weeklies are full of accounts of regattas; and regattas from Portland, Maine, to Milwaukee were watched by twenty to thirty-five thousand spectators.<sup>47</sup> There must have been a good deal of boating apart from college

<sup>45</sup> Bunn, p. 25.

<sup>46</sup> *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, I (February 2, 1856), 118; see also the full-page engraving accompanying the item “Sleighing in Broadway,” *Harper's Weekly*, II (March 6, 1858), 149. European visitors were all pleased at the gaiety of the scene and by the variety of equipages—twenty-passenger vehicles, family sleighs, cutters, milk wagons fitted with runners, drays (Batcheler, pp. 102–3; Hancock, p. 183; Disher, p. 241).

<sup>47</sup> Dulles, p. 142.

crews and full-blown yachting, but such rowing and canoeing has left no record. In April, 1860, there were reported to be 224 boats and 466 oarsmen, as well as 35 yachts, on the Charles River;<sup>48</sup> and in many cities there were rowing matches and "regattas" for townspeople and professionals. In winter there was a little iceboating on northern waters.

Riding and driving were certainly among the most common amusements, with participants in all classes of society. The wealthy had their fine saddle or trotting horses and prided themselves on their dexterity at managing them: it was a common criticism of the new Central Park that its entrances opened directly on roads which were likely to be the scene of impromptu races. The park itself included miles of bridle paths and driving roads. In a time when the natural mode of transportation was by horseback or carriage, many people took for granted the ownership of a horse or horses, though as to what proportion of the population did have their own horses I have only the vaguest of notions.<sup>49</sup> It must be remembered, too, that anywhere in the country it was a very small community indeed that was too small to have a livery stable.

I have no way of knowing how common hunting and fishing were among the urban population, but I suspect that for men and boys even in the cities they were *the* common recreational pursuit. Cities were not so big then but what a few minutes would bring one into the country, nor did one have to go far to find abundant fish and game. No elaborate equipment was necessary, and anyone who had any leisure at all could find odd moments to go off with his gun or his pole for a little sport. Big-game hunting and game fishing were within the reach of those only moderately well-to-do.

Geographical differences were not very important. Even

<sup>48</sup> *Boston Evening Transcript*, April 16, 1860, citing the *Saturday Evening Gazette*.

<sup>49</sup> See above, pp. 265 ff. Partly it depended upon the degree of urbanization and the traditions of the locality. Los Angeles streets were, at least on week ends, likely to be the scene of displays of horsemanship by horsemen in their fanciest clothes. All farmers had their teams, of course, even if they could not afford buggy or saddle horses—farm boys and girls did much of their courting while riding in the pleasant evenings—and probably a greater proportion of small-town dwellers than of city dwellers had horses.

boys living in Boston or New York could go hunting or fishing,<sup>50</sup> and much the greater part of the population found it even simpler. Farther south, the canvas-back ducks of the Chesapeake Bay region were highly esteemed. In Virginia coon hunts and possum hunts were favorite sports, and in the salt-water sections oyster roasts and fish fries provided an excuse for frequent outings. The deep-sea fishing and game hunting of the Carolinas (the game included wildcats, deer, bear, foxes, and wild turkeys, as well as snipes, partridges, plover, woodcocks, and geese, ducks, and other water fowl) were known to sportsmen the world over;<sup>51</sup> even small boys in these regions could go fishing frequently and hold night hunts for coon and possum. In all regions of the South there was an abundance of fish and game, and feats of skill (especially with the rifle) were a popular pastime. In the West there were pheasants, prairie chickens, rabbits, squirrels, and other game—even cranes and storks, while the buffalo and elk of the Far West attracted sportsmen from the East and even from abroad. The usual game in the Old Northwest included prairie fowl, squirrels, wild turkeys, and (in the early fifties) wild pigeons, rabbits, and quail. There were still a few deer, and occasional hunters kept deerhounds.

Other outdoor amusements can be dismissed—at least for the urban population—with the briefest mention. The game of racquet had been imported from abroad and a few clubs organized, but it found favor only among the wealthy. There was curling in Central Park and a little swimming. In California there were still bullfights and fights between bears and bulls, but these were only rarely held. Foot-racing appealed to many in the North and West. Other outdoor sports, popular now, were not to be found in the fifties. Croquet was introduced in the sixties and did not become popular until later still; lawn tennis was not introduced until the seventies. Bicycles required

<sup>50</sup> Cf. the quotation from Henry Adams, p. 373, below.

<sup>51</sup> See William Elliott, *Carolina Sports by Land and Water* (New York: Derby & Jackson, 1859). There was a number of books on fishing and hunting published during the fifties and early sixties, the most popular probably being those of Henry William Herbert ("Frank Forester").

years of improvement after their first appearance in the middle sixties before bicycling could become a fad. And golf, in the modern sense, did not get its start in this country until the late eighties, and not until the twentieth century did its reach extend down to the upper middle class; variants, called "bandy," "cambuc," or "goff," were played a little in some parts of the country. Archery, which had had a few followers earlier in the century, was virtually dead in 1860.

*Parks and playgrounds.*—An agricultural population has little need for athletics, and still less is there any need for setting aside tracts for outdoor exercise or for the enjoyment of nature. Only in the cities were there people who rarely had a chance to get out into the country; but so rapid had been the growth of city populations that the need for civic action to meet the new problems of urbanization were only just coming to be realized. Cities had not awakened to the necessity of providing parks and playgrounds for their populations—of bringing the country in to those who could not go out to it. New York's Central Park, with its 843 acres (the largest in the country) was a wilderness until the late fifties; during the war it was improved at a cost of \$400,000 a year. Brooklyn spent \$1,000,000 on its recently acquired Prospect Park, Philadelphia almost nothing on the new Fairmount Park. There were parks of a sort in Chicago, Boston, and Baltimore.

Boston's only real park was the Common—a 40- or 50-acre tract—although there were a few small public squares. Elsewhere in New England there were public squares and an occasional spot of landscaped public ground, but no parks or playgrounds for the enjoyment of the poor. Before Central Park was acquired, New York city directories listed nineteen parks, but a number of these "were merely places where the street intersections were a little wider than usual"; others (for instance Hudson Square and Grammercy Park) were private property; still others (as the Bowling Green) were padlocked. The whole park area was about 170 acres, but not over 100 acres were open to the public. The largest single park, the Battery, was 21 acres.<sup>52</sup>

<sup>52</sup> Nevins, *Evening Post*, p. 195.

Central Park, after years of agitation, was finally voted in 1857, and work began immediately. Part of the area was smoothed out and planted to grass and trees, and other parts made more rugged; there were pleasure drives, bridle paths and walks, a garden, a skating pond, a lake with boats to rent, an arboretum, and other features. In the summer there were free band concerts. By 1860 it was being visited by as many as 75,000 persons on a fine Sunday in spring, and as many as 84,000 on a good day for skating.

Philadelphia had had public squares from the beginning. Fairmount Park was originally acquired early in the century as part of the program of development of the city's water supply; in the forties and fifties large tracts adjoining the original area were donated to the city, but the city itself did little in the way of park development. Chicago's first park, Dearborn Park, was acquired in 1839, and from that year there was a gradual expansion of the park system; not until the sixties, however, were there any large parks, and the vacant tract between Michigan Avenue and the Illinois Central tracks was used for recreation. Baltimore's Druid Hill Park, a 500-acre area, high and undulating, with deep ravines, springs, and brooks and with a splendid view, was opened in 1860. Elsewhere in the East there were no parks worthy of the name, and in the West the need for parks had not yet become apparent. Nowhere were there public playgrounds. The lack of parks prompted Olmsted to write in *Appleton's Cyclopaedia*, in 1861:

In the United States there is, as yet, scarcely a finished park or promenade ground deserving mention. In the few small fields of rank hay grasses and spindle-trunked trees, to which the name is sometimes applied, the custom of promenade has never been established. Yet there is scarcely a town or thriving village in which there is not found some sort of inconvenient and questionable social exchange of this nature. Sometimes it is a graveyard, sometimes a beach or wharf, sometimes a certain part of a certain street; sometimes interest in a library or a charitable, a military, or even a mercantile enterprise, is the ostensible object which brings people together. But in its European signification the promenade exists only in the limited grounds attached to the capitol and to the "white house" at Washington, and in the yet half-made park of New York.<sup>53</sup>

<sup>53</sup> Quoted in Frederick Law Olmsted, Jr., and Theodora Kimball (eds.), *Frederick Law Olmsted* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1922), I, 129.

*Indoor sports.*—The same rapidity of urbanization that explains the lack of parks and playgrounds explains the general lack of interest in indoor sports. The rural population had never felt any need either for parks or for athletics—they got plenty of physical exercise in the open whether they liked it or not. Now there were coming to be great numbers of people who worked inside and needed healthful recreation out of doors; more and more of them were working at jobs which gave them little physical exercise, so that they needed some sort of indoor sports or gymnastics to keep them in good health. There was little opportunity for this in the city. What Henry Adams wrote of Boston in 1850 was largely true ten years later, and of all American cities.

Boston at that time offered few healthy resources for boys or men. The bar-room and billiard-room were more familiar than parents knew. As a rule boys could skate and swim and were sent to dancing-school; they played a rudimentary game of baseball, football, and hockey; a few could sail a boat; still fewer had been out with a gun to shoot yellow legs or a stray wild duck; one or two may have learned something of natural history if they came from the neighborhood of Concord; none could ride across country; or knew what shooting with dogs meant. Sport as a pursuit was unknown. Boat-racing came after 1860. For horse-racing, only the trotting-course existed. Of all pleasures, winter sleighing was still the gayest and most popular.<sup>54</sup>

Some few were coming to be aware of the consequences of this failure of the city population to find some substitute for outdoor life and work. Oliver Wendell Holmes—whose literary fame sometimes makes us forget that he was one of the most progressive medical men of his generation—wrote in an often quoted paragraph:

I am satisfied that such a set of black-coated, stiff-jointed, soft-muscled, paste-complectioned youth as we can boast in our Atlantic cities never before sprang from loins of Anglo-Saxon lineage. . . . We have a few good boatmen, no good horsemen that I hear of, nothing remarkable, I believe, in cricketing, and as for any great athletic feat performed by a gentleman in these latitudes, society would drop to a man who should run around the Common in five minutes.<sup>55</sup>

<sup>54</sup> *The Education of Henry Adams* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1918), pp. 38-39.

<sup>55</sup> *Atlantic Monthly*, I (1858), 881. There is a very similar editorial comment in *Harper's Magazine*, XIII (1856), 646.

That there was coming to be an interest in gymnastics is shown by the career of Dio Lewis, who interested many in Boston and its vicinity in correctional and developmental exercises. Gymnasiums were built in Boston, New York, Chicago, San Francisco, and other cities to provide regular programs of calisthenics and instructional facilities at small fees. Colleges began to do more for the physical well-being of their students, and Y.M.C.A.'s took up the work among the young men of the cities. Articles on gymnastics appear in such magazines as the *Atlantic Monthly*, *Harper's Magazine*, and the *North American Review*, and books were written on the subject. The German *Turnvereine*, first appearing in 1849, by 1860 had over 150 societies with a membership of nearly 10,000 scattered over the country.

However impressive these beginnings may be, they were only beginnings, and few people, relative to the population, performed calisthenics at home or took gymnasium workouts. Few young men took up amateur boxing for the amusement or exercise it offered them, and one hears nothing of amateur wrestling, fencing, or tumbling; there were no indoor swimming pools, as far as I know, and no such indoor games as handball or basketball.

*Balls and parties.*—Such commonplace amusements as card playing and dancing were so much taken for granted—except by occasional critics—that it is next to impossible to find out with any degree of assurance just how much they counted in the social life of the time. With dancing there is the additional difficulty that the single term takes in such diverse manifestations as the staid social functions of Boston, the ballrooms and the miserable little dives of the cities, the Saturday night dances in frontier taverns, and informal parties given at home. Boston's social life seems to have been somewhat stuffy, and among the élite there was little genuine gaiety.<sup>56</sup> But even Boston had such festivities as "Gilmore's Monster Ball," with Gilmore's

<sup>56</sup> Cf. Gratton, I, 127-31; C. F. Adams, pp. 39-40.



Band, an orchestra, and refreshments; two dollars admitted one man and two women.<sup>57</sup>

No stuffiness characterized the social life of the greater number of New York's inhabitants. Nichols wrote that New Yorkers were even more given to dancing than to making money—a very strong statement indeed. During the season (November to March) there were balls five nights a week, in perhaps twenty ballrooms, besides many private parties. Social clubs and societies were organized with dancing as their chief activity, and organizations whose chief purpose was something other than dancing had their balls, too. There were fifty or sixty regiments of military volunteers, hundreds of societies and lodges—Freemasons, Odd Fellows, Sons of Temperance, Druids, and various Irish and German societies, trade and benevolent organizations—all with their dances. A dollar or two would secure admission to the best of the balls, and for the most expensive five dollars would buy a ticket for one gentleman and two ladies.<sup>58</sup> Even in the panic winter of 1857–58, 10,000 persons attended the calico-dress ball of a New York City benevolent society; and masquerade balls grew so popular that the police authorities, concerned over the attendance of a vicious element, invoked the New York statute against them.<sup>59</sup> The informality that characterized a large segment of New York's social life is indicated by the fact that the hotels from time to time during the season gave dances for guests and others—the Metropolitan Hotel, for instance, used to give "Metropolitan Hotel Hops."<sup>60</sup>

The swankiest functions in Philadelphia were the traditional "Philadelphia Assemblies," which were held into the fifties, at least as late as 1853–54, and possibly later. They were apparently discontinued in the later fifties but revived after the Civil War. The "Bachelors' Ball" continued several years after the Assemblies had been discontinued.<sup>61</sup>

<sup>57</sup> Advertisement in *Boston Evening Transcript*, February 15, 1860.

<sup>58</sup> Nichols, I, 279–80.

<sup>59</sup> A. C. Cole, p. 198.

<sup>60</sup> See *Frank Leslie's Illustrated Newspaper*, VII (February 29, 1859), 198–200.

<sup>61</sup> Thomas W. Balch, *The Philadelphia Assemblies* (Philadelphia: Allen, Lane & Scott, 1916).

Throughout the Northeast and the West the attitude of the community toward dancing was likely to differ from one region to another according to the religious views of the founders. In many New England communities and in communities farther West where the New England influence predominated, dancing was likely to be regarded as sinful, though perhaps tolerated. But in most towns soirées, cotillion parties, and balls were held periodically, with great or less formality. As in the big cities, there were military companies, fire companies, and lodges and other groups which gave dances. In the South dancing had never had the stigma attached to it that it had in the North, and dancing parties were probably even more characteristic of southern social life than of northern. Among the gentry subscription balls, with admission usually five dollars, were popular. In frontier towns dancing was probably the most common sort of amusement—frequently the only one. Nowhere was dancing more popular than in Utah. There were very formal balls at the Social Hall, and many other less formal parties in Salt Lake City. In other communities in the Territory the school or meeting-house could be used for a dance, and someone always found to play a fiddle, an accordion, or an organ. People came from far and wide, bringing their children and sometimes their supper. Public balls were all the rage in San Francisco, while in Los Angeles the dances were spontaneously got up whenever the young men felt it was time to have another dance and were held quite simply.

In many parts of the Southwest the Spanish and Mexican influence colored the social festivities, and there were fandangoes at El Paso, Santo Fé, Los Angeles, and other places. In New Orleans the Mardi Gras had long been an established part of the city's social life, and the Creole influence was discernible also in other social events.

Although there was a great deal of card-playing, I am inclined to believe that parties were seldom given with card-playing as the principal object—at least I have seen no such parties mentioned.

*Social organizations.*—The anti-Masonic movement of the

forties, centering in New York State, had by 1860 practically died out, having done little to restrict the growth of the Masonic and other lodges. Cole writes:

The mystery of the secret fraternal society strengthened its hold on city folk, and prefigured the place it was later to occupy in the social organism. Usually it was the Masonic order or the Odd Fellows, but newer organizations like the Improved Order of Red Men, the United Order of Friends, the Independent Order of United Brothers and the Sons of Malta also attracted a following. The secret ritualism was one explanation of the remarkable popularity of the Know Nothing party and of the Sons of Temperance. Apart from certain clergymen few seemed to share the hostility of President Jonathan Blanchard of Knox College who classed not only the fraternal orders but even the Sons of Temperance as "anti-Republican in their tendencies and subversive of the principles both of the Natural and Revealed Religion."<sup>62</sup>

The lodges of that day were not very exacting in the reports required of local secretaries, and it is impossible to make a very satisfactory estimate of total membership. There were apparently something like 5,000 Masonic lodges, with a membership in the neighborhood of 200,000, distributed all over the country but proportionately greater in the South.<sup>63</sup> *De Bow's Review* reported in 1858 that membership in the Odd Fellows was greater than 193,000.<sup>64</sup>

The swanky social clubs were then, as now, only for the socially acceptable. Batcheler thought New York had several good clubs; he mentioned the Union, the Union League, the New York, and the Century Clubs.<sup>65</sup> Other cities of the country had clubs of the same sort, among the more exclusive being the Adelpia Club (Philadelphia), the Somerset Club (Boston), the

<sup>62</sup> *Irrepressible Conflict*, p. 195.

<sup>63</sup> *The History of the Ancient and Honorable Fraternity of Free and Accepted Masons* (rev. ed.; Boston: Fraternity Pub. Co., 1898) gives the number of lodges as 4,534 in 1860, with a membership of 184,811 (pp. 877-93). Reports of state organizations in 1857 and 1858 collected for Robert Morris (*The History of Freemasonry in Kentucky* [Louisville: Rob Morris, 1859]) totaled 4,055 lodges "registered" and 178,176 "members returned" (p. 431). There are several states missing in each of these totals.

For the history of Masonry in the United States see the above and also Robert R. Gould et al., *The History of Freemasonry* (New York: John C. Yorsten & Co., 1889), Vol. IV; and Albert G. Mackey and William R. Singleton, *The History of Freemasonry* (New York: Masonic History Co., 1898), Vols. V-VI.

<sup>64</sup> *De Bow's Review*, XXIV (1858), 287.

<sup>65</sup> P. 59.

Maryland Club, the Reading Room (Newport), the Boston Club (New Orleans), and the Pacific Club (San Francisco).<sup>66</sup>

I suppose there must have been thousands of social clubs, organized mostly to sponsor parties and dances for their members, but their history is unrecorded and what they were like must be left to the imagination. The American had long since become a "joiner" in the distinctive American sense of that word; and, as Nichols remarked in a passage previously quoted, groups organized for highly diverse purposes quickly came to have social functions.

The Young Men's Christian Association grew rapidly from its organization in the United States in 1851; by 1860 there were associations in two hundred American cities. The Y.M.C.A., being something new, differed quite widely from one city to another. Most associations had a wide range of activities—cultural, benevolent, and religious; few went in for games or for gymnastics. While the Y.M.C.A.'s were more concerned with the religious and moral side of life, and less with the social, than they are today, they did bring young men of the city together, provide them with meeting places and reading-rooms, and lead them to work together.

The fire departments of the fifties were almost as much social organizations as fire-fighting units, and—as I have already pointed out—they strongly resisted any attempts to institute paid departments on a business-like basis. From New York City down to the frontier villages the parades and balls of the fire departments were notable events, and pumping matches between rival companies attracted crowds of interested spectators. The social functions of the local militia companies, too, almost dwarfed the ostensible reason for their formation. Like the fire departments, the volunteer guards held frequent parades and balls, and their uniforms were so much more splendid than those of the firemen as to offset the gorgeously painted fire engines the firemen drew in their parades. In some states all men within certain age limits were enrolled in militia companies and required to report for muster at stated intervals; such a muster

<sup>66</sup> For gentlemen's clubs see Dixon Wecter, *The Saga of American Society* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1937), chap. vii.

was ordinarily looked upon in the rural regions as a holiday and celebrated as such with heavy drinking, betting, fighting, and sports.

The social program was an important feature of many benevolent societies<sup>67</sup> and trade-unions. The Sons of Temperance were organized as a fraternal order, and numerous other temperance organizations had their social side.<sup>68</sup> In many cities there were societies of Irish and German immigrants and of those of other nationalities, which provided a social life for those who might have found it difficult to adapt themselves to new language and new social customs. In the West the migrants from the same state or region sometimes formed clubs. The list of social organizations is almost endless, and I have mentioned only a few of the many varieties.

*Other amusements.*—Photography could hardly become a hobby until the invention of the snapshot camera in 1888 simplified the process of taking pictures, but Americans did enjoy having their pictures taken by daguerreotypers. In New York "amid the variety of shops, the stranger cannot fail to be struck with the wonderful number of oyster-saloons stuck down in the basement, and the daguerreotypists perched in the skyline; their name is legion; everybody eats oysters, and everybody seems to take everybody else's portrait."<sup>69</sup> In big cities and small towns alike there were great numbers of photographers,<sup>70</sup> usually charging 25 cents; while in the smaller communities Weld noticed horse-drawn "daguerrean cars," where there was insufficient business for a permanent photographer.<sup>71</sup>

<sup>67</sup> In Chicago, by 1860, there were already a Firemen's Benefit Association, a Policemen's Benefit Association, a Bricklayers' and Masons' Benefit Association, a Drayman's Benefit Association, a Seamen's Mutual Benevolent Society, and a Laborer's Benefit Association (Pierce, II, 445).

<sup>68</sup> The number of temperance groups is astounding. To use Chicago for illustration again, there was a Chicago Juvenile Temperance Society in the fifties, Bands of Hope a little later; there was the Washington Temperance Society, white and colored bodies of the Good Templars, a Total Abstinence Benevolent Association, a Scottish Temperance Society, and perhaps others (Pierce, II, 436).

<sup>69</sup> Henry Murray, p. 18.

<sup>70</sup> In 1860 some 2,650 persons reported their occupation as "daguerreotypers"; they were pretty evenly distributed over the country (*Eighth Census: Population*, pp. 660-61).

<sup>71</sup> Weld, p. 236.

Autograph-collectors had already begun to make themselves a nuisance to celebrities: Horace Greeley rebuked the youthful Frances Willard when she tried to obtain his signature, and Emerson wrote in his journal that he had a letter a week asking for his autograph.<sup>72</sup> In the cities autographs were being bought and sold.<sup>73</sup> In many American homes there were stereoscopes to entertain children and visitors, and thousands of homes had canaries and other birds for pets. The new inventions in wood-working machinery had brought the price of toys down, though I suspect most children had to be satisfied with a few marbles and a homemade doll or toy.

Among grown-ups chess was a more popular game than it is now. There were weekly chess columns in the illustrated weeklies, and frequent articles on chess matches played by the acknowledged masters; and there were innumerable items about Paul Morphy, the most famous chess player. Checkers were even more popular than chess, though receiving less attention in print. I have already said that there were probably few card parties, but when there was any time to kill many families played cards among themselves; card games must have been a fairly common way of passing the time when visitors dropped in. Batcheler thought that "card-playing is carried on to a ruinous degree,"<sup>74</sup> but whether he meant playing within the homes or elsewhere is not clear. There was, of course, much more card-playing in the South than in the North.

#### RURAL RECREATION

*Outdoor sports.*—The varied amusements of city people make an interesting topic, and they are a significant foreshadowing of what was to come later. Nevertheless, the urban population was but a small proportion of the total, and the opera, the theater, and the public dance hall had little to do with the main

<sup>72</sup> Frances E. Willard, *Glimpses of Fifty Years* (Chicago: Woman's Temperance Pub. Co., 1889), p. 105; Edward Waldo Emerson and Waldo Emerson Forbes (eds.), *The Journals of Ralph Waldo Emerson* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Co., 1912), VIII, 261.

<sup>73</sup> *Boston Evening Transcript*, November 2, 1860, reported an auction sale of autographs in New York City.

<sup>74</sup> Batcheler, p. 35.

course of American life. What did farm families do for amusement in those days before the automobile and the radio brought city and farm so close together?

Of all rural diversions, hunting and fishing must certainly have occupied first place. Every farmhouse had all the equipment needed, and the boys seldom needed to go far to find a stream to fish in or a place to find some game. Even in the East there were plenty of rabbits and squirrels, and enough woodchucks, and waterfowl and other game birds, to add zest to the sport. In the South and West, as we have seen, game was more abundant and more varied. West of the Mississippi there was less game to be shot for food, but even there an occasional deer or turkey could be added to the usual bag of prairie fowl, rabbits, and squirrels; there were fewer fish in the rivers but enough to provide a little food and more sport. We may be sure that the adult members of the family, even if they seldom had time to hunt and fish themselves, encouraged their children in these pursuits, which—if successful—added variety and savor to an otherwise monotonous diet.

Not all hunting had the provision of food as its ostensible object. In the plains states wolf hunts were both a necessity and an exhilarating sport, frequently participated in by the whole community. (Here, as in the East, the old "squirrel rifle" was still the one in common use, muzzle-loading and using powder and ball but with percussion caps instead of the older flint-and-steel. These rifles, many beautifully made, were the most prized personal possessions of their owners.) Wolf hunts seem to have been a favorite sport, too, in mining camps and frontier trading posts, where recreational opportunities were few and the wolves were many. In such outposts as these, however, buffalo-hunting was an even better sport.

Second only to hunting and fishing in the recreation of farm families were riding and driving. Every farm had its horses, and to visit their neighbors, to go courting, to go to town—all the normal events required the use of horses. In the South, with its long distances, its hospitality, and its lack of commercial amusements, riding and driving occupied a more important place than

elsewhere.<sup>75</sup> Many planters had fine stables and elaborate saddles, carriages, and fittings. In the western states, and for the same reasons, there was a good deal of visiting and pleasure driving, but no such sums could be spent for horses and carriages. And in southern California, with its ranches, riding was the natural way of enjoying one's self; on the ranches rodeos were the great events.

It must not be supposed, either, that racing was an amusement peculiar to the cities. Throughout the country there were state and county agricultural shows, at which trotting matches were a big feature. And in the rural regions of the South and West particularly any occasion that brought people together, from shopping at the crossroads store to a church service, was likely to be the scene of a quickly arranged race between horses with a local reputation for speed. These usually involved only two horses, but the betting, by owners and bystanders, might involve as much as several hundred dollars. In some parts of the South there was a little riding to the hounds, but this was a sport for the élite only.

No description of rural life—and again this applies more to the South and West—would be complete without some mention of rough-and-tumble fighting. For many men and boys this was about the only form of athletic diversion, and the stories of such legendary characters as Mike Fink testify to its popularity among the rougher element. The young Lincoln was renowned as a fighter, and such books as Mark Twain's *Life on the Mississippi* afford additional illustrations. In the mining camps rough-and-tumble fighting and an occasional prize bout were the main sources of amusement—unless, indeed, still more brutal combats between animals or between animals and men could be staged.

<sup>75</sup> Cf. the following passage from a contemporary novel of southern life: "Horses and carriages were abundant, the fall dry, and the roads fine. On each pleasant day, gay companies of ladies and children were seen in carriages, riding from one plantation to another, attended by gentlemen on horseback. Their hospitality, for the most part, was free and open, rather than refined; their life rough, and far from conducing to intellectual or moral progress. Hunting, fishing, riding over their plantations, and looking at their crops, constituted the out-door exercise of the gentlemen; cards and other games formed the in-door pastimes" (D. Walker, *Stanley: or Playing for Amusement* [Nashville: Printed for the author, 1860], p. 18); see also Dodd, *Cotton Kingdom*, pp. 70-79.



Winter sports were peculiar to the North, but we may be sure that skating on the country ponds and streams was a favorite diversion for farm boys and girls, and that sleighing—either in sleighs or in wagons or buggies fitted with runners—gave enjoyment to the whole family.

*Parties and dances.*—It may be that in New England their religious scruples kept farmers and villagers from dancing, though even there many communities probably tolerated square dances at least, but certainly in most parts of the country the occasional dances were the only purely social occasions in which the whole community took part. Southern rural communities had “dance frolics” as often as twice a week, with dancing to music provided by a local fiddler who would also call out the steps. The Countess Pulszky described the ball she attended in a Missouri community. The squire was responsible for the affair, furnishing the house and a dinner (which included venison, fowl, pork, wheat and corn bread, tea, pumpkin and mince pie, and whisky), and charging a dollar a couple. The guests started arriving about ten o’clock in the morning and danced the old dances to an improvised orchestra until the next morning, when they had breakfast before leaving.<sup>76</sup> I suspect that not many dances were organized in that particular fashion, but to dance all night and into the next morning was the rule at all frontier dances.

In Kansas and Nebraska, except in a few puritanical communities, dances were usually a feature of holiday celebrations; and in Colorado dancing was a favorite amusement as soon as there were women to dance with. The quadrille, the schottische, and the waltz were danced to music provided by a violin, an accordion, or a mouth harp. In Texas, in Utah—everywhere in the West—balls and parties got up by the settlers were the common form of entertainment.

*Agricultural exhibitions.*—Before the Civil War the agricultural fair had come to occupy an established place in the farmer’s calendar. There were innumerable county fairs, and more than half the states had more or less official state fairs. Horses,

<sup>76</sup> Pulszky, II, 77-79.

cattle, sheep, swine, and poultry were put on exhibition, and farm families came from miles around and enjoyed themselves immensely. The farmers brought their best produce, their wives displayed quilts and foods, and even the children brought in samples of their accomplishments. There were prize competitions for all varieties of livestock, farm produce, and domestic manufactures and sometimes plowing and spading matches. Trotting matches were held, and "lady equestrians" had a chance to display their proficiency before an admiring audience. All these fairs drew large crowds, in a holiday mood, and besides the numerous stands to provide food and drink there were occasionally attractions suggestive of the later midways and sideshows.

*Work as play.*—While people living in rural communities, and especially those on the Frontier, had to be able to furnish their own amusements, their little leisure left them small time for boredom. As was natural under such circumstances, they contrived to make social events of some elements of their workaday life; and they probably had more real enjoyment in their log-rollings, their cornhuskings, their house-raising, and their quiltings than did city people in their plays, parties, and dances. Hamlin Garland has described how his family and their neighbors enjoyed their work in their early years of pioneering:

Buoyant, vital, confident, these sons of the border bent to their work of breaking sod and building fences quite in the spirit of sportsmen. . . . With them reaping was a game, husking corn a test of endurance and skill, threshing a "bee." . . . My father's laughing descriptions of the barn-raising, harvestings and rail-splittings of the valley filled my mind with vivid pictures of manly deeds.<sup>77</sup>

Wherever corn was grown, the husking bee was a social event of the first magnitude,<sup>78</sup> and even today the cornhusking is well known in many rural regions. Especially on the Frontier log-rollings and fence-buildings provided another excuse for all the families in the community to assemble for a day of friendly co-

<sup>77</sup> Quoted by Dulles (p. 273) from Hamlin Garland, *A Son of the Middle Border*.

<sup>78</sup> Cf. "Cornhusking in New England," *Harper's Weekly*, II (November 13, 1858), 728-29; C. B. Johnson, p. 83; L. E. Young, p. 330.

operation. House-raising and barn-raising were also community events in regions where carpenters were few and where everybody knew everybody else. In the North sugaring-off was a glorious festival, and in the South cotton-picking and hog-killing times had their recreational aspects. At all such times the women of the community provided bountiful dinners which included all the variety in foodstuffs the region had to offer. Usually generous quantities of liquor were provided, but there was little overindulgence.

The women, whose time was largely taken up by their house-keeping duties and farm chores, found time for quilting bees and carpet bees, and even when they went visiting they were likely to take their sewing along. In small towns the ladies' aid society was a center of the women's social life. In the village described by Charles B. Johnson it met afternoons at the homes of its members to sew. For the most part it made underwear and men's working clothes and marketed its products. The women sewed until supper time, when husbands, brothers, and fathers would come in and all would sit down to the evening meal. After supper there would be two or three hours for sociability.<sup>79</sup> In the South quilting bees and the like were not infrequently followed by supper and dancing.

*Other rural pleasures.*—The dispersion of population in farming areas made distances greater and meant that the opportunities for professional entertainment and for organized social life were much more limited. Hunting and fishing, riding, skating, courting, were all a part of rural life, but the intervals between community gatherings were desperately monotonous unless there was some opportunity for getting off the farm and talking to other people. To satisfy this need for human contact every community had its accepted gathering places, the center of the "social life" of the farmers.

In the plantation states planter and farmer alike found recreation at certain public social centers, such as the crossroads tavern, the country store, the merchant mill, or the church, school-

<sup>79</sup> *Illinois in the Fifties*, p. 80.

house, or lodge.<sup>80</sup> In North Carolina, for instance, there was a goodly number of taverns, and on public roads they were not likely to be more than six or seven miles apart. At these taverns the farmers met to talk politics, play card games, make bets, and stand treat for mint-sling or brandy. The tavern always subscribed to at least one newspaper, and this provided ample material for conversation. But the bar was the chief attraction, as it offered liquors which could not be made at home—West Indian and Continental rum, claret, Madeira, port, and Tene-riffe wine, domestic whisky, beer, wines, and cider. Habitual drunkenness was frowned upon, but there was no stigma attached to “restrained drinking,” and the moderate use of liquor was considered healthful. Holidays were always occasions for heavy drinking. The crossroads store provided a place to meet around a roaring fire, to exchange jokes, and to learn the news. On Saturday the store was the favorite resort for drinking, lounging, and horse racing. The merchant mill—for milling flour, meal, or grits, or even papermaking or spinning—was a point of congregation for gentlemen farmers, where they would play marbles, pitch quoits, and drink toddy. Candy pulls and informal parties provided amusement for the younger people, and the children found interest in visits to the cotton houses, in the barnyard, in hog-killing and -curing, and in the annual rounding-up and branding of whatever cattle there might be. Such feats of skill as gander-pulling and turkey-shooting were always popular in the South.<sup>81</sup>

<sup>80</sup> See esp. G. G. Johnson, *Ante-bellum North Carolina*, pp. 95-101 and *passim*.

<sup>81</sup> Parsons saw a gander-pulling in the suburbs of Milledgeville, Georgia. Word of the gander-pulling had gone out into the countryside, and thousands of spectators (men and women, including the “élite”) were assembled. There were whisky tents, for the thirsty, and festive seats. The gander’s neck was lubricated with oil, his legs tied together, and he was hung from a limb about ten feet off the ground. Those participating in the sport would ride ten rods at full speed, attempting to win the gander by pulling his head off. Tickets were 50 cents. After the gander-pulling there was gambling, drinking, cock-fighting, horse racing, and a fox-chase (Parsons, pp. 135-38; cf. also Johnson, *Ante-bellum North Carolina*, p. 111).

In a turkey shoot the entrants paid a small fee for the privilege of shooting at the head of a turkey tied some distance away. Sometimes the turkey was buried up to the neck, so that there was no chance of hitting the wrong place. Whoever hit the head won the bird.

In the West the tavern and stage stand were the real hub of the village, but the store was a popular resort.<sup>82</sup> The porch in front of the store was in warm weather the favorite gathering place for men and boys, almost every adult having with him a pipe to smoke or a knife for whittling. Even in towns the size of Springfield, Illinois, Saturday was the time for farmers and their families to come to town for purchases, gossip, and a good time. During the term of court at each county seat people came in from every township. Court week in spring and autumn was a gala season for farm families: it was the time when they bought six months' provisions, and they came in big wagons filled with women and children. Usually there were political speeches during the week, sometimes in the form of debates.<sup>83</sup> When nothing so exciting was going on, there might be a charivari or a spelling bee at the school to while away the long winter evening. The interest in spiritism provided an activity for others.

Still farther west the tavern served as the public gathering place—theater, banquet hall, ballroom. Amusements were of a homely sort easily provided. The author of an emigrants' guide wrote.

A lady asks—How do the women amuse themselves?—Fair lady, the women are not behind in their amusements, I assure you. Firstly, every good housewife cannot fail to take a positive pleasure in seeing her little domestic arrangements prosper around her. Like the honest rustic in one of Shakspeare's plays, who said, "My greatest pleasure is to see my ewes graze, and my lambs suck;" every good lady at the head of a household will say, "My chief pleasure is to hear my hens cackle and my ducks quack." There was in times of yore in many of our Scottish households a notable organ with some stops, called a Loom. Some of our fashionable town ladies will perhaps require to turn up their dictionaries to see what that means. There was also a celebrated piano with one string, called a spinning wheel, which hummed a right pleasant roundelay in the chimney corners. In those days there were fewer Delaines, and more Druggets—less crying and mair 'oo—than in these enlightened times; and young ladies were not ashamed to help their mothers. Well, things are ordered a good deal after this fashion still in the West, and the fair workers are treated, or rather treat themselves, with an occasional holiday, having well deserved it. When a nice little coterie of "gals" have got as much patchwork put together as will make, perhaps, half a-dozen bed quilts, their mothers, always properly desirous of encouraging thrift, issue invita-

<sup>82</sup> See esp. C. B. Johnson, *passim*.

<sup>83</sup> Beveridge, II, 200, 243.

tions to all the good and true wives and maidens of the locality, to come to the quilting frolic and a frolicsome time they have of it, I assure you; for after the quilting is over, then the young lads pour in—the fiddle squeaks—the crockery is judiciously laid away, as being unfitted for the occasion—and though I will not say with Davy Crockett, that the next morning you might gather up handfuls of toe-nails, I have no doubt but the fiddler's elbow, and the young folks' heels, and the old folks' sides, are all a little the worse of the wear for the last night's pastime. Add to this, there are Wool-pickings, Candy-pullings, Weddings, Inferrals, Spelling-schools, Sleigh-rides, &c., &c., to describe all of which at present would spoil many a good story, so I forbear. I hope the fair inquirer will now see that her honourable sex has due provision made in the way of amusement. Of course, I have not said anything of the many love-adventures, from which, if we are to believe the poets, more happiness flows than from any other affairs on this side of heaven.<sup>84</sup>

While serenading newlyweds or participating in a taffy-pull was amusement enough for some, there were more exciting things going on.

"Out West" is certainly a great country. . . . There is one little town in "them diggins" which . . . is "all sorts of a stirring place." In one day, they recently had two street fights, hung a man, rode three men out of town on a rail, got up a quarter race, a turkey shooting, a gander pulling, a match dog fight, had preaching by a circus rider, who afterwards ran a footrace for applejack all round, and, as if this was not enough, the judge of the court, after losing his year's salary at single-handed poker, and licking a person who said he didn't understand the game, went out and helped to lynch his grandfather for hog stealing.<sup>85</sup>

Life for these frontiersmen was often brutal and always vigorous. It would hardly be an exaggeration to say that their amusements were drinking, gambling, and dancing, hunting, horse racing, and fighting, with now and then a turkey-shooting or a gander-pulling by way of variety. Refinement was not one of the frontier virtues.

In some of the western towns the arrival of a steamboat or a stagecoach was an occasion requiring the assistance of everyone in town, from the small children to the aged and infirm; and in the river towns the arrival of the first boat in the spring, bringing new stocks of merchandise, was frequently celebrated with a dance and general jollification. Weddings (and the accompany-

<sup>84</sup> Regan, pp. 400-401.

<sup>85</sup> Quoted from the *Spirit of the Times*, XXI (June 28, 1851), 205, in Walter Blair, *Native American Humor, 1800-1900* (New York: American Book Co., 1937), p. 69.

ing charivaris and "infairs") were eagerly participated in by the whole neighborhood. In California the same sort of amusements—sewing, visiting, steamboat arrivals, church services, gatherings at the taverns, singing schools—were supplemented on the ranches by rodeos and by "bull-coursing" and occasional lassosings of grizzly bears. Men in mining camps and in trading and military posts were largely dependent for amusement upon drinking, gambling, and hunting, upon gossiping, and upon participation in brutal sports. When there were enough women—wives, laundresses, professional entertainers, or Indian squaws—an all-night dance provided diversion; sometimes there was a bowling alley, billiard saloon, or shooting gallery within reach.<sup>86</sup>

*The slaves and their recreation.*—As I have so often had occasion to say before, generalization about any phase of slave life is apt to be misleading. Ballagh pictures the slaves in Virginia as happy-go-lucky, without troubles, always enjoying themselves. Their quarters were the scene of much hospitality and sociability, and there was much dancing, laughing, singing, and banjo-playing after the day's work. The slave's cabin was the home of plantation melody and the clog dance.<sup>87</sup> Gaines's recent study of the plantation calls attention to the fact that harvesting, corn-shucking, rice-beating, tobacco-curing, and hog-killing were all made occasions for festivity and that weddings, camp meetings, and funerals all offered diversion. Nevertheless, Gaines's conclusion is that the traditional emphasis on the recreational side of slave life is much exaggerated.<sup>88</sup> Probably many a Negro could echo Booker T. Washington's complaint—that he could not remember ever having had time for anything but work.<sup>89</sup>

To some extent the slaves participated in the enjoyment of

<sup>86</sup> Dick, *Vanguards of the Frontier*, pp. 16–23, 270 ff.

<sup>87</sup> Ballagh, p. 107.

<sup>88</sup> Pp. 163–64.

<sup>89</sup> Washington, p. 5. I have drawn my impressions largely from the following: Flinders, p. 172; G. G. Johnson, *Ante-bellum North Carolina*, pp. 551–59, and *Sea Islands*, pp. 140–46; Moody, pp. 87–90; Phillips, *American Negro Slavery*, p. 314; Patterson, p. 67; and R. H. Taylor, p. 84; Abbott, p. 74; Avirett, chaps. xx–xxi and *passim*, Burke, pp. 229–31; Hopley, I, 103; Olmsted, *Seaboard Slave States*, pp. 101–2; Smedes, pp. 125–26; Northup, pp. 213–22; and De Bow, *Industrial Resources*, II, 332–37.

the whites in moonlight fox chases and in coon and possum hunts, in weddings in the planter's family, and in the Christmas festivities; the whites found occasional pleasure in watching the slaves' crap games and cockfights. On most plantations the slaves had their Saturday afternoons and Sundays free and could do as they pleased with their time—look after their truck patches, go fishing (and sometimes hunting, although the possession of a gun was usually forbidden), visit with other slaves (usually only on their own plantation), and so on. Log-rollings and hog-killings were full of pleasurable activities, and at corn-huskings the planters might furnish barbecues, whisky and brandy, and music for dancing. Many planters provided the slaves with their own dances frequently and kept at least one Negro who could perform on the fiddle. The slaves made much of weddings, funerals, and baptisms among themselves and could usually attend church services and prayer meetings. Christmas was the great holiday: slaves were given three or four days, or even the whole holiday period, off; planters were more free about issuing passes than at other times, and the slaves could go to town or visit at neighboring plantations; there were sure to be presents of food, clothing, tobacco, and money. The Fourth of July was frequently made the occasion for a general barbecue. During the greater part of the year, however, the slaves probably led lives of unrelieved drudgery, and what little time they had off was needed for rest and for sociability among themselves.

What the Negroes did for amusement in the cities depended partly upon their status, partly upon law and custom. During the winter the Negroes of Montgomery had "assemblies" or balls which were got up in truly grand style: tickets were a dollar for one "gentleman" and two "ladies;" all the fashionable dances were danced; no one was admitted except in full dress; and all the regular formalities were studiously observed. Commenting on the Negroes' love of music and their musical ability, Olmsted remarked that in all southern cities there were Negro bands, often very good ones.<sup>90</sup>

<sup>90</sup> *Seaboard Slave States*, pp. 552, 554.



## SUMMARY

*The pursuit of happiness.*—I have, in these last two chapters, touched upon many different uses for leisure time. In so doing I have probably devoted a disproportionate number of pages to the amusements of city dwellers. I do think that it is important to see what these people were doing with their time, but it is important chiefly because the search for pleasure later became such a prominent characteristic of American life and because such a large part of the population came to be grouped in cities. What I should like to emphasize is not the similarity in the use of leisure then and now, but the contrast.

First of all, it needs to be said that commercial amusements or even organized social life were at best a superficial part of American life in 1860. For nearly all the population there was little time for recreation, and after the hard day's work—for laboring man, farmer, or housewife—there can have been little desire to go out to look for entertainment. What enjoyment they failed to find in work had to be found in the home. There were the simple pleasures of family life. Women used much of their leisure for sewing and embroidering, the children had a few playthings, the men their books and newspapers. Even in the towns and cities visiting and informal entertaining were the normal social activities. As George Frisbie Whicher describes life in Amherst:

There was some visiting about in the evening, when the elders gravely discussed affairs of village and church or listened to the reading of the sententious poetry then in vogue, while the youngsters perhaps organized a gayer party of their own in the kitchen. Formal dinners were seldom given before the sixties, but entertaining at informal suppers or "handed teas" was common. On state occasions the dignitaries of the town and College held "levees" or evening parties, ending invariably at ten o'clock. When students were invited the festivities were apt to be more protracted, though hardly less stiff. . . .

The household engaged in giving a party was deeply involved in the anxiety of preparation for it, and there were not infrequently flurries behind the scenes as ladies made quick transitions from the part of cook to that of hostess.<sup>97</sup>

<sup>97</sup> *This Was a Poet*, pp. 13-15. Whicher also emphasizes the interest of the men in "constructive enterprises" as a substitute for lighter amusements.

In southern towns the gentry had occasional teas and "set suppers" to relieve the village boredom, while, as in the West and elsewhere, court week, general muster, and election day were always busy days for the common people.<sup>92</sup> For northern farmers, southern planters, and frontiersmen alike, visiting among themselves was almost the only social life. Occasional dances and work "bees" found eager response. Home life, visiting and entertaining, taffy pulls, Sunday-school picnics, temperance rallies, political meetings and holiday celebrations, meetings of the ladies' aid, parades of fire companies and volunteer guards—homely things like these occupied most of the leisure time of the people in all sections of the country.

Time adds a romantic charm to these homely doings and makes one occasionally long for a return to "the good old days." It is easy to forget that life held little beauty for many of the population. The long hours, the hard work, gave the farmer small opportunity for that serene co-operation with nature city people associate with farm life;<sup>93</sup> and the urban laborer, finishing his long day's work, can hardly have thought of his tenement room as offering him any greater pleasure than rest for his tired body. The heavy indulgence in hard liquor, the thousands of saloons, indicate anything but a satisfying life.

<sup>92</sup> G. G. Johnson, *Ante-bellum North Carolina*, pp. 160-62.

<sup>93</sup> Cf. the quotation on p. 118, above.

## CHAPTER XIII

### CONCLUSION: THE STANDARD OF LIVING IN 1860

#### FAMILY INCOME AND FAMILY EXPENDITURE

*Money incomes.*—The preceding chapters should have made clear the differences in content between the standard of living in 1860 and that of today. Not only is our present consumption made up in large part of goods and services not consumed at all in the earlier period, but, even when nominally the same things are consumed, they are likely to be quite different in form and quality. Moreover, in many consumption categories less is now produced at home and more purchased in the market. All this must be kept in mind in studying incomes, expenditures, and the level of living in monetary terms.<sup>1</sup>

When income levels differ widely, no single income can be regarded as at all "typical" for the whole population; we can obtain a clearer impression from incomes typical of different occupations. In New York City in the sixties only about 1 per cent of the population received incomes of \$842 or more, the equivalent of \$2,000 in 1929. In most parts of the country skilled laborers received from \$1.50 to \$2.00 a day, unskilled and factory laborers about \$1.00 a day, farm hands about \$14.00 a month and board. Loss of time through unemployment and illness makes it difficult to estimate annual incomes: probably the bulk of industrial employees received between \$250 and \$400 a year, and farm hands about \$140 a year and board; even skilled workmen were doing well to earn \$600 or \$700. Lawyers and doctors seem to have received somewhere in the neighbor-

<sup>1</sup> Table 22, Appen. B, gives Hansen's estimates of real wages (money wages adjusted to the cost of living) for decennial years, 1820-1900.

hood of \$1,000 a year in country districts, \$2,000 in the cities. A few entrepreneurs had incomes as high as \$20,000 a year.<sup>2</sup>

*Money expenditures.*—While it is not difficult to find the adequacy of the level of living challenged during the fifties, almost always it is in general terms; few had yet recognized the effec-

TABLE 10\*  
WORKINGMAN'S BUDGET  
PHILADELPHIA, 1851  
(FAMILY A)

Item of Expenditure	Amount
Butcher's meat (2 lb. a day).....	\$ 72.80
Flour (6½ bbl. a year).....	32.50
Butter (2 lb. a week).....	32.50
Potatoes (2 pk. a week).....	26.00
Sugar (4 lb. a week).....	16.64
Coffee and tea.....	13.00
Milk.....	7.28
Salt, pepper, vinegar, starch, soap, soda, yeast, cheese, eggs.....	20.80
Total expenditures for food.....	\$221.52
Rent.....	\$156.00
Coal (3 tons a year).....	15.00
Charcoal, chips, matches.....	5.00
Candles and oil.....	7.28
Household articles (wear, tear, and breakage)...	13.00
Bedclothes and bedding.....	10.40
Wearing apparel.....	104.00
Newspapers.....	6.24
Total annual expenditures.....	\$538.44

\* Source: *New York Daily Tribune*, May 27, 1851. These amounts, given in a letter to the editor, are supposed to be the minimum upon which a family of five could live; expenditures for ice cream, medical care, and recreation are expressly excluded. I have rearranged the items and converted them to an annual basis.

tiveness of the statistical approach. Consequently, family budgets for the period are hard to find. I have found three, which I reproduce here as Tables 10-12. These are suggestive, though

\* See Appen. B. Professor Wright suggests that about 1860 the "rich" may be thought of as having incomes of from \$5,000 to \$10,000; the "middle class," \$800-\$5,000; and the working classes from \$200 to \$800; the cash outlay of farmers can rarely have been less than \$50 or more than \$250 (Wright, p. 1038).

TABLE 11\*  
STANDARD WORKINGMAN'S BUDGET  
NEW YORK CITY, 1853  
(FAMILY B)

Item of Expenditure	Amount
Groceries.....	\$273.00
Rent.....	100.00
Clothing, bedding, etc.....	132.00
Furnishings.....	20.00
Fuel.....	18.00
Lights.....	10.00
Taxes, water, commutation.....	5.00
Physicians' and druggists' charges.....	10.00
Traveling.....	12.00
Newspapers, postage, library fees.....	10.00
	<hr/>
Church, charity, etc.....	\$590.00 10.00
	<hr/>
Total annual expenditures.....	\$600.00

\* Source: *New York Times*, November 8, 1853. The expenditures are supposed to be those of a family of four, "living moderately."

TABLE 12\*  
TYPICAL BUDGET  
NEW YORK BUSINESSMAN, 1857  
(FAMILY C)

Item of Expenditure	Amount
Rent.....	\$ 550.00
Butcher and fishmonger.....	144.32
Flour and bread.....	66.05
Fuel.....	192.00
Light.....	34.25
Servants.....	96.00
	<hr/>
	\$1082.62
Grocer (including liquor).....	205.29
Pew rent.....	42.00
	<hr/>
Total annual expenditures.....	\$1329.91

\* Source: *Hunt's Merchants' Magazine*, XXXIV (1858), 772. The expenditures are supposed to be those of a "frugal family of four," with an annual income of \$1,500.

there is no assurance that they are typical. The first two, which apply to working-class families, were originally presented as lists of the expenditures which such families might legitimately be expected to make; actual expenditures may have been considerably different. It will be noted, for instance, that neither of these budgets includes any expenditure for tobacco or recreation; one of them explicitly omits any expenditure for medical care.<sup>3</sup> Even with these omissions they still represent a scale of living which must have been out of reach of the great majority of working-class families, while only the fairly well-to-do can have lived on the scale indicated in Table 12.

Food, as we should expect, absorbed more of the family income than did any other expense category. In one of the two working-class budgets 41.1 per cent of the total expenditures of \$538.44 was for food; in the other, 45.5 per cent of the total expenditures of \$600.00 (see Table 13). In 1935-36, according to the estimates of the National Resources Committee, families of the "middle third," which is most nearly comparable, spent 37.5 per cent of their incomes for food, while those of the "lowest third" spent 50.2 per cent of their incomes (42.9 per cent of their expenditures) for food. If families with incomes of \$500 or \$600 had to spend upward of 40 per cent of their incomes for food, the greater number of families with smaller incomes must have had to spend a still larger proportion. The amount allowed for rent is quite different in these two budgets; data in Appendix D lead me to believe that the lower is the more nearly typical, though the higher amount conforms more closely to the percentage spent at present. In both these budgets the percentage of income spent for clothing is about twice as high as the percentage so spent at the present time. The agreement between the two makes it doubtful that this can be dismissed as an overestimate; it is much more likely that with incomes as low

<sup>3</sup> There are additional difficulties in trying to fit these expenditures into the classification adopted by the National Resources Committee, as I have done in Table 13. Expenditures for "personal care" were probably included in those for "clothing," although in one instance soap was included with food; and the "shelter" items probably do not correspond exactly. Further, there is no allowance for "negative savings," though some families must have gone into debt.

TABLE 13\*  
PERCENTAGE ALLOCATION OF EXPENDITURES BY AMERICAN FAMILIES  
1850-60 AND 1935-36

	FAMILY A 1851	FAMILY B 1853	FAMILY C 1857	AVERAGE FOR 1935-36		
				Lower Third	Middle Third	Upper Third
Income.....	\$538.44†	\$600.00†	\$1,500.00	\$471.00	\$1,076.00	\$2,959.00
Percentage of income for:						
Food.....	41.1	45.5	27.7	50.2	37.5	21.7
Shelter.....	38.4	24.7	58.2	37.6	31.1	24.3
(Housing).....	(29.0)	(16.7)	(36.7)	(24.4)	(18.5)	(13.8)
(Household opera- tion).....	( 5.1)	( 4.7)	(21.5)	(11.4)	(10.0)	( 8.1)
(Furnishings)....	( 4.3)	( 3.3)	(...)	( 1.8)	( 2.6)	( 2.4)
Clothing.....	19.3	22.0‡	.....	10.0	9.5	8.5
Transportation:						
Automobile.....	.....	.....	.....	3.3	5.3	7.2
Other.....	.....	2.0	.....	2.4	1.7	1.3
Medical care.....	.....	1.7	.....	4.3	3.9	3.6
Recreation.....	.....	.....	.....	1.8	2.6	3.0
Personal care.....	.....	.....	.....	2.5	2.1	1.5
Tobacco.....	.....	.....	.....	2.2	2.1	1.4
Reading.....	1.2	1.6	.....	1.3	1.2	.8
Education.....	.....	.....	.....	.5	.6	1.0
Other items.....	.....	.8§	.....	.6	.5	.5
All consumption items.....	100.0	98.3	85.9	116.7	98.1	74.8
Savings.....	.....	.....	.....	-19.5	-1.8	19.1
Gifts and personal taxes.....	.....	1.7	14.1	2.8	3.7	6.1
Total outlay.....	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0	100.0

\* Source: Tables 10-12, above, and National Resources Committee, *Consumer Expenditures in the United States*, Tables 2A and 4A, pp. 77 and 78. The classification of expenditures is also that of the National Resources Committee; for comments on the comparability of these budgets see text (p. 396, n. 3).

† Income is not expressly stated; I have presumed it to be the same as total expenditures.

‡ Includes an unspecified amount of bedding.

§ Taxes, water, and commutation.

|| Presumed to be the difference between specified income and expenditures; the only given item is pew rent, 2.8 per cent.

as they were in the fifties a larger proportion did have to be spent for such a necessity as clothing.

These two budgets strengthen my impression that the typical working-class family of the fifties spent at least half its income for food, probably at least a fourth for shelter, and most of the rest for clothing. While it is probable that such families did spend more for medical attention and for recreation than the budgets indicate,<sup>4</sup> the amounts cannot have been large. The *New York Times* seemed to think a family in these circumstances would give about \$10.00 to church and charity, but current expenditures left nothing over for savings or insurance.<sup>5</sup> Taxes, it will be noted, were ignored in one budget and in the other were regarded as too small an item to be listed separately—something less than \$5.00 a year.

The third budget (that for Family C) cannot, I think, be regarded as typical, even for the prosperous businessman. The 27.7 per cent of total income spent for food and liquor may well be representative, but the amounts spent for rent and for household operation and servants—a total of 58.2 per cent for shelter—are much too high to be typical, even when all allowances are made. Clothing, a major item, is omitted, as are all other items except pew rent. It is possible that the author of this budget may have regarded the total of all current expenditures (\$1,287.91, when pew rent is excluded) as typical of the “frugal” family with a \$1,500 income, even though some of the individual items are out of line; this total—85.9 per cent of income—is almost exactly the same proportion of income as was currently spent by persons in the \$2,000–\$3,000-income class in 1935–36 (85.5 per cent) and rather larger than that spent by the highest third as a whole (74.8 per cent).

Information for a comparison of farmers’ budgets in the two

<sup>4</sup> And perhaps less for reading. Both these budgets were intended for newspaper publication, and it may be that their authors were courting the editors’ approval.

<sup>5</sup> Savings were certainly small. “If a young man saves \$52 a year he is doing well” (*New Hampshire Journal of Agriculture*, December 17, 1859, quoted by Clarence H. Danhof in “Farm-making Costs and the ‘Safety Valve’: 1850–1860,” *Journal of Political Economy*, XLIX [1941], 357). The average family man was probably doing well to save much less than that.



periods is completely lacking. In any case the decrease in the proportion of farm production intended for home use would make such a comparison difficult.

*The rise in the level of living.*—That consumption in 1860 was on a higher level than it had been at the end of the Colonial period seems certain. Space does not permit any detailed examination of the factors leading to this rise. The whole period had been one of agricultural expansion and of improvement in both agricultural and industrial processes and equipment. At the same time new facilities for transportation were making possible not only the gains from division of labor but the exchange of products between regions having different climates and resources. Capital, both business and personal, was accumulating,<sup>6</sup> while the low unit costs resulting from mass production and abundant natural resources were making it possible for people to devote more and more of their income to the purchase of goods formerly regarded as luxuries. The urbanization associated with industrialization aided in creating a mass market, and the increase in the circulation of periodicals enabled advertisers to create a demand for standardized commodities. There was little to impede this rise in the level of living, though the too rapid growth of some cities, partly the result of immigration, did tend to intensify the problem of providing adequate housing.

Political and social factors were also favorable to a rise in the level of living. Success in industry or trade was the surest way to the respect of the community, while leisure—idleness—was frowned upon. Even after they had become comfortably well-to-do, businessmen continued to work, either in deference to public opinion or because they would not otherwise have known what to do with their time. The tradition of individualism had many consequences. One was that business enterprise was not restrained by political controls. Another was the scantiness of

<sup>6</sup> "The estimated wealth for 1790 gives \$171 per capita for the free population; the corresponding figure for 1860 is almost \$590, or \$514 for the total population, which was equivalent to about \$1,240 in 1926 dollars. Later figures, in 1926 dollar equivalents and including nontaxable property, are about \$2,520 in 1900, \$3,360 in 1922, and \$2,640 in 1937" (Wright, p. 1061).

public assistance to the poor, which, however it may have stimulated initiative, meant personal hardship to many. Still another was the failure to provide for adequate police and fire departments, public thoroughfares, sanitation, and other community needs in which no private profit could be made. As a passive factor in the country's economic growth must be mentioned the fortunate geographical position of the United States, which by preventing any threat of invasion made it possible to devote all resources to the satisfaction of peacetime needs.

#### AN "AMERICAN" STANDARD OF LIVING

*Distinctiveness in content of the American standard of living.*—Americans, though not yet using the phrase "the American standard of living," had by the time I write of come to regard their level of living as superior to that of any other people. Was there, however, anything distinctively "American" about it? As regards food, the most striking differences were quantitative. Americans consumed more food and a greater variety of food than did the people of any other nation. I am not sure that it was better food, and certainly it was not better cooked, but in abundance and variety it was unique. The most distinctive single characteristic was the great amount of meat consumed, but there were also more bread, more fruit and (perhaps) more vegetables, more sugar, more coffee. The simplest explanation for the higher food consumption in this country than abroad is that in no European country was there so much land relative to the population. Regional specialization (facilitated by rail and water transportation and by internal free trade) and technical improvements in farming and processing played their part.

Housing appears to have differed from housing abroad chiefly in that the farming and working classes were better housed; the level of living was higher, but not different in kind.<sup>7</sup> It does seem that Americans paid more attention to comfort and con-

<sup>7</sup> Because of differences in materials available, an even greater proportion of American than of European houses were of wood construction, and there were certain other differences in construction occasioned by climatic differences. These, however, are beside the point.

venience than did other peoples and had a greater liking for gadgets of all kinds. Differences in plumbing, heating, and lighting stand out, but the greater use of speaking-tubes and counter-weighted window sashes, of double boilers and eggbeaters, is just as distinctive. One notes also that Americans were lacking in any permanent attachment to their homes; they expected to move as soon as they could afford better houses—and did, in fact, move often—and many of them preferred living in boarding-houses to maintaining establishments less luxurious than they felt entitled to.

Again, in respect to clothing, what struck Europeans was not so much the magnificence of the wealthy—though some did mention that—as the respectable appearance of the working class. What with the absence of class distinctions in dress, the greater purchasing power of the workers, and the use of inexpensive, ready-made clothing, it sometimes appeared that American men all wore a sort of uniform of black coat and trousers. Nor was it always easy to tell from her dress to what class of society a woman belonged, though certainly there was more variety in women's clothing than in men's. Not even among women does extravagance in dress appear to have been typical, and one senses a certain disapproval of it on the part of other Americans.

Expenditures for food, clothing, and shelter required almost the entire income of most American families. Five per cent, perhaps—10 per cent would certainly be too liberal an estimate—remained for expenditures on all other goods and services. This seems very small indeed, especially when one remembers that the "all other" includes medical care, local transportation, and education, as well as reading and recreation. It seems small, but—lacking specific information—I have the very strong impression that even 5 per cent was a larger proportion of their income than most families in even the most advanced European countries had to spend on similar items. Certainly in absolute amount, if not in percentage, American expenditures on these goods and services were much greater than those of any other people. Reduced to its lowest terms, this means that produc-

tivity in the United States was already high enough to leave more resources for the satisfaction of needs less pressing than those for food, clothing, and shelter.

Since this high productivity was in large part the result of American ingenuity and of large-scale production, it was characteristic of the American standard of living that the goods and services to which this ingenuity could be applied or which could be produced on a large scale bulked relatively large. When much labor and particularly when fine craftsmanship or artistry was called for, there was less difference between the "American" and other standards of living. The distinctiveness in content of the American standard of living in 1860 resolves itself, I think, into these two elements—it included a greater amount of goods in every category of consumption, and the amount was greatest of all in those categories where goods could be produced, uniform in pattern, in large quantities.

*Differences in emphasis.*—That is about as far as the economist may safely go. One may wonder, however, whether it was really as important that the American standard of living was different from other standards of living as it was that the Americans seemed to regard a high standard of living as their chief goal. Unquestionably they were more materialistic than were less democratic peoples.<sup>8</sup> The possession of wealth was not only the way to creature comfort but to power and esteem. To "go ahead," to "get on," was the thing. Even education seems to have been prized chiefly because it enabled the individual to "go ahead."

Lacking an aristocracy, carefully educated, accustomed to leisure, and brought up in the aristocratic tradition, the United States was lacking also in standards of taste. Americans thought of themselves as a "reading" people, yet few can be said to have been "well" read. Their attendance at lectures was the subject of enthusiastic comment, yet the lectures were more likely to be on phrenology than on poetry, on spiritualism than on the vital

<sup>8</sup> This is less true now than in 1860 and was less true in 1860 than still earlier, not because the Americans were becoming less materialistic but because other peoples were becoming more so.

issues of the day. Their houses had all the latest comforts and conveniences but abounded in tasteless decoration; even their meals indicated a greater delight in abundance and variety than in good cookery.

In such an atmosphere it was natural that luxury and display should be taken for elegance. Niblo's Garden was as garish as a moving-picture "palace" of the 1920's and 1930's. European travelers were amazed at the ornateness of such restaurants as Taylor's, which, as they also noted, were the most popular among people with money to spend. Hotels outdid themselves in their magnificence, and even steamboats were admired for their gaudiness. Women who spent much on dress did it with ostentation; their husbands liked to luxuriate in swanky barber-shops.

In apparent contrast with this love of luxuriousness, but reflecting the same absence of taste, was a curious coarseness and callousness among people in all walks of life. We read of lovely women dragging the trains of their expensive dresses through tobacco juice; of a senator being knocked off his feet by a hog in a Washington street; of stately carriages over their hubs in filth and litter. The poor were farmed out to the lowest bidder or confined in squalid poorhouses with idiots and lunatics, the blind, the deaf, and the dumb, vagrants and drunkards; in the cities they were regarded with indifference or annoyance. Men of all classes delighted in the most brutal of sports, while farmers "willingly go so far into essential self-debasement, sometimes, as to contemn beauty and those who love it, and to glory above all things in brute strength, and brute endurance."<sup>9</sup>

Although restlessness and the desire to get ahead do seem to have pervaded the whole of American life and thought, it would be a serious mistake to conclude that all, or even a majority, of Americans found life futile and meaningless. At one end of the scale were those who found pleasure in expanding their business and in cultural and philanthropic endeavor; at the other end those whom necessity compelled to work so hard and so long

<sup>9</sup> Above, p. 118.

that they had no time for boredom. Between were the many who joyed in their work and their worship and in the simple pleasures that were open to all. What was significant was not that there were many who needed to have others entertain them, who used their leisure fruitlessly—what was significant was that it was this class that was growing.

Much as the comforts and conveniences of life can contribute to enjoyment, something more than material possessions is necessary if people are to feel that life is really worth living. One is sometimes tempted to believe that at the same time their standard of living was rising and the amount of their leisure increasing the Americans were becoming a less happy people. If this is true, it does not mean that we should return to "the good old days." It does mean that it is fully as important for us to learn how to use what we have as it is to get more.

# APPENDIX A

## GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION OF POPULATION IN 1860

TABLE 14\*  
POPULATION IN 1860 BY STATE AND SECTION

State or Territory	Total Population	Per Cent White	Persons per Square Mile
<i>The North</i> .....	19,378,077	98.5	.....
Maine.....	628,279	99.5	21.0
New Hampshire.....	326,073	99.9	36.1
Vermont.....	315,098	99.9	34.5
Massachusetts.....	1,231,066	99.4	153.1
Rhode Island.....	174,620	97.9	163.7
Connecticut.....	460,147	98.0	95.5
New York.....	3,880,735	98.6	81.4
New Jersey.....	672,035	96.3	89.4
Pennsylvania.....	2,906,215	98.0	64.8
Ohio.....	2,339,511	99.5	57.4
Indiana.....	1,350,428	99.0	37.6
Illinois.....	1,711,951	99.5	30.6
Michigan.....	749,113	98.3	13.0
Wisconsin.....	775,881	99.4	14.0
Iowa.....	674,913	99.8	12.1
Missouri.....	1,182,012	90.0	17.2
<i>The South</i> .....	10,529,146	62.8	.....
Delaware.....	112,216	80.6	57.1
Maryland.....	687,049	75.0	69.1
District of Columbia.....	75,080	81.0	1,294.5
Virginia.....	1,596,318	65.5	24.8
North Carolina.....	992,622	63.5	20.4
South Carolina.....	703,708	41.4	23.1
Georgia.....	1,057,286	56.0	18.0
Florida.....	140,424	55.4	2.6
Alabama.....	964,201	54.5	18.8
Mississippi.....	791,305	44.7	17.1
Louisiana.....	708,002	50.5	15.6
Arkansas.....	435,450	74.4	8.3
Tennessee.....	1,109,801	74.5	26.6
Kentucky.....	1,155,684	79.5	28.8

\* Sources: *Eighth Census: Population*, pp. 593-94; *U.S. Statistical Abstract*, LVII (1935), p. 3, Table 5.

The boundaries of most of the states and territories in the Frontier have been changed since the publication of the Eighth Census; for boundaries as they were then see any historical atlas.

## THE STANDARD OF LIVING IN 1860

TABLE 14—*Continued*

State or Territory	Total Population	Per Cent White	Persons per Square Mile
<i>The Frontier</i> .....	1,536,098	83.2	.....
Minnesota.....	172,023	98.5	2.1
Dakota.....	4,837	53.5	†
Nebraska.....	28,841	99.5	0.2
Kansas.....	107,206	99.5	1.3
Texas.....	604,215	69.7	2.3
Colorado.....	34,277	99.9	0.3
New Mexico.....	93,516	88.5	0.4
Utah.....	40,273	99.5	0.3
Nevada.....	6,857	99.5	0.1
Washington.....	11,594	96.5	0.1
Oregon.....	52,465	99.0	0.5
California.....	379,994	85.0	2.4

† Less than 0.05 persons per square mile.



## APPENDIX B

### INCOMES IN 1860

Because of the great diversity of annual earnings among different occupations, different industries, and different parts of the country no average can be sufficiently typical of all to have much meaning. Particular difficulties arise in trying to generalize for a period as long ago as the fifties, because of the fragmentary nature of the information available.<sup>1</sup> But discussion of the

<sup>1</sup> The Aldrich Report (U.S. Congress, Senate, Committee on Finance, *Report on Wholesale Prices, Wages, and Transportation* (Senate Report No. 1394 [52d Cong., 2d sess.; Washington: Government Printing Office, 1893]) contains a mass of data, nowhere summarized or analyzed and subject to a number of limitations: the data are for a small number of firms in a few industries, located only in the Northeast, including indiscriminately men, women, and children, of all classes of labor, and with no way of allowing for seasonal variations. The report includes no professional labor (except schoolteachers), no clerical, no sales (except for two New Hampshire stores), no domestic servants, no agricultural labor. It is incomplete even for manufacturing and transportation.

The Tenth Census (U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Tenth Census of the United States, 1880: Report on the Statistics of Wages . . .*, Vol. XX [Washington: Government Printing Office, 1886]) also contains wage series for a small number of occupations. The geographical area included is somewhat larger than that in the Aldrich Report, but for lack of discriminating selection and classification their significance and reliability are somewhat doubtful.

U.S. Department of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, *History of Wages in the United States from Colonial Times to 1928* (Bull. 604 [Washington: Government Printing Office, 1934]), contains a number of wage series, collected from the northeastern states, classified by industries and subclassified by occupations. Wage data are for "high," "low," and "average" wages; but how the average was determined is not indicated, nor are the number of individual cases or the general reliability discussed.

Carroll D. Wright's well-known *Report on the Factory System* (U.S. Bureau of the Census, *Tenth Census of the United States, 1880: Report on the Factory System of the United States* [Washington: Government Printing Office, 1883], II, 527-610) gives (pp. 578-80) some wage information relating to workers in textile factories.

Wesley C. Mitchell includes no new material in his *History of the Greenbacks* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1903); but he breaks down the Aldrich Report by wage classes (male and female) and by occupational groups and breaks down the material in the *Tenth Census* by occupational groups (East and West) and by wage classes.

Another breakdown of the data in the Aldrich Report, this one by industries only, may be found in Charles B. Spahr, *An Essay on the Present Distribution of Wealth in the United States* (2d ed.; New York: Thomas Y. Crowell & Co., 1896), pp. 110-11.

Edith Abbott, in "The Wages of Unskilled Labor in the United States, 1850-1900" (*Journal of Political Economy*, XIII [1905], 321-67), breaks down the data on unskilled labor in the Aldrich Report by occupational groups; and gives United States Department of Agriculture estimates for the wages of agricultural labor.

standard (and cost) of living is pointless unless it can be related to the level of money income.

There is hardly enough information to justify any general statements about the salaries paid to members of the executive and professional classes before the Civil War.<sup>2</sup> Rufus S. Tucker, after a study of the Civil War income tax returns, concludes that there was a greater concentration of income, a greater contrast between the incomes of the rich and the poor, during and just after the Civil War than at present.<sup>3</sup> In 1863 there were 7,800 New Yorkers (0.61 per cent of the population) receiving as much as \$1,684 a year—the equivalent, according to Snyder's index of the cost of living, of \$4,000 in 1929; 9,700 (0.76 per cent) received as much as \$1,260—the equivalent of \$3,000; and 13,500 (1.05 per cent) received as much as \$842—the equivalent of \$2,000. Nine thousand eight hundred and fifty (0.76 per cent) received the equivalent of from \$2,000 to \$10,000; 6,050 (0.48 per cent) received the equivalent of from \$3,000 to \$10,000; and 4,150 (0.33 per cent) received the equivalent of from \$4,000 to \$10,000. At the top there were 705 who received as much as \$21,050, or as much in purchasing power as would have been represented by \$50,000 in 1929.<sup>4</sup>

The only professional group included in the Aldrich Report was school-teachers, and the data included was for only 24 teachers in city schools (in only four cities) and for only 4 teachers in country schools. The average salaries for male teachers ranged from \$1,167 a year in Baltimore to \$2,267 a year in Boston; those for female teachers from \$292 in Baltimore to \$400 in Boston and St. Louis. The country-school teachers, all in Massachusetts, received averages of \$34.09 a month for the men and \$17.52 a month for the women. According to the *New York Tribune*, teachers in the private schools of New York City received about \$18.00 a week.<sup>5</sup>

The wages for skilled labor seem to have ranged typically from \$1.50 to \$2.00 a day in the various occupations, averaging something like \$1.75 a day (see Tables 15 and 16). In New York City the wages may have been a little less—perhaps \$1.60 a day. The *New York Tribune* estimated in 1860 that there were about 30,000 "mechanics and working manufacturers" in that city, each with from three to six years of special training. Their average wage was not over \$10.00 a week when they were fully employed, and they lost nearly a fourth of their time by sickness, holidays, and unemployment. It was rather above the mark, the *Tribune* concluded, to place the annual earnings of every journeyman mechanic and manufacturer working or seeking work at \$400 a year.<sup>6</sup> From the series reported in the *Tenth Census*, wages appear to have

<sup>2</sup> Something is said of the incomes of physicians in chap. viii above.

<sup>3</sup> Rufus S. Tucker, "The Distribution of Income among Income Taxpayers in the United States, 1863-1935," *Quarterly Journal of Economics*, LII (1938), 585.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*, pp. 571-75.

<sup>5</sup> *Hunt's Merchants' Magazine* (XLII [1860], 750) reprints from the *New York Tribune* the average weekly wages and the number of hours in the working day for a number of occupations in the city.

<sup>6</sup> March 10, 1860.

been slightly higher in the West than in the East, though Miss Pierce's figures for Chicago are not higher than those of the *Tribune* for New York.<sup>7</sup>

TABLE 15\*  
WAGES IN SELECTED OCCUPATIONS, 1860

Occupation	Average Number Employed (In Sample)	Average Daily Wages 1860
Laborers.....	1,300	\$1.01
Watchmen.....	35	1.04
Teamsters.....	25	1.18
Quarrymen.....	341	1.11
Masons.....	123	1.98
Masons' helpers.....	63	1.08
Stonecutters.....	91	2.00
Painters.....	69	1.53
Carpenters (1860-66).....	215	1.57
Pattern-makers.....	49	1.65
Molders.....	108	1.64
Molders' helpers.....	33	0.99
Blacksmiths.....	69	1.81
Blacksmiths' helpers.....	62	1.09
Boilermakers.....	45	1.60
Boilermakers' helpers.....	35	0.96
Machinists.....	440	1.62
Machinists' helpers.....	69	1.16
Engineers.....	68	2.17
Firemen.....	224	1.25
Printers.....	34	1.70
Second-hands (textiles).....	35	1.33
Spinners (female).....	43	0.51
Weavers (male).....	96	0.93
Weavers (female).....	188	0.65
Foremen and overseers.....	106	2.13
Unskilled laborers.....	1,701	1.00
Assistants of handcraftsmen.....	535	1.00
Skilled handcraftsmen.....	1,404	1.66
Superintendents.....	140	1.99

\* Source: Mitchell, pp. 299-331, original data from Aldrich Report.

The Aldrich Report contained only a small sample for miners; but, according to Spahr,<sup>8</sup> the careful selection of the sample makes the average more typical than their mere number would indicate. The average wage in the East

<sup>7</sup> See Table 22, and p. 414, n. 14.

<sup>8</sup> P. 113.

was about \$1.03;<sup>9</sup> farther west they were apparently paid more—\$1.35 in Michigan.<sup>10</sup>

The wages paid unskilled laborers outside factories do not seem to have ranged far from \$1.00 a day; and \$1.00, or a few cents more, would probably be fairly typical (see Table 17). This was rather better than what the factory operatives received. Men employed in factories were paid from 50 cents to \$1.50 a day, averaging perhaps a few cents less than \$1.00; the wages for

TABLE 16\*

## WAGES IN SELECTED FACTORIES AND MILLS, 1860

Industry and Occupation	Average Daily Wages or Earnings
<i>Pig iron (Catasauqua, Pa.):</i>	
Fillers at blast furnaces.....	\$ 1.37
Keepers at blast furnaces.....	1.85
<i>Bar iron (Etna, Pa.):</i>	
Puddlers.....	2.67
Puddlers' helpers.....	1.33
<i>Bar iron (Duncannon, Pa.):</i>	
Puddlers.....	2.01
Puddlers' helpers.....	1.01
Bar-rollers.....	3.20
<i>Potters:</i>	
Hollow-ware pressers.....	10.00
Handlers.....	9.00
<i>Glass blowers:</i>	
Window glass.....	3.32
Two-ounce bottles.....	2.25
Four-ounce bottles.....	2.25
Eight-ounce bottles.....	2.40
Pint bottles.....	2.97
Quart bottles.....	3.08

\* Source: Mitchell, pp. 316-19.

women ranged from 30 cents to \$1.00, with 50 or 60 cents being typical. Foremen and superintendents, of course, were paid as well as skilled labor—something like \$2.00 a day.

I have found no estimates of the earnings of farmer-proprietors; and, even if satisfactory estimates could be found, the fact that so much of the farmer's living comes from his own production would make analysis difficult. There is

<sup>9</sup> Abbott, p. 364. According to Thompson and Jones (p. 241), in 1860 the wages in coal mining averaged \$264 a year to more than 30,000 miners.

<sup>10</sup> U.S. Bureau of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics, p. 333.

more information as to the earnings of farm labor, though complicated by the seasonality of the occupation and by the fact that part of the laborer's earnings were usually paid in board. The pay seems to have ranged from 50 to 75 cents a day, with board, and from 75 cents to \$1.00 a day, without board, throughout the northern states, being rather higher in New York and New England than in the West. By the month with board, it ranged from \$10.00 to \$18.00, averaging perhaps \$14.00 (or, without board, only about \$2.00 more). The yearly earnings ranged from \$120 to \$175, with \$140 typical

TABLE 17\*  
WAGES OF UNSKILLED LABOR IN  
SELECTED INDUSTRIES, 1860

Occupation	Number of Men in Sample	Average Daily Wage
Laborers†.....	472.5	\$1.01
Yard hands.....	54.5	1.02
Watchmen.....	34.0	1.03
Teamsters.....	21.5	1.13
Quarrymen.....	504.5	1.08
Coal-heavers.....	13.0	0.985
Helpers‡.....	213.5	1.08
Unskilled factory operatives....	116.5	0.79
(Unskilled labor, including irregular data§).....	(2,910.0)	(1.02)
Total.....	1,430.0	1.03

\* Source: Edith Abbott, "The Wages of Unskilled Labor in the United States," pp. 361-63.

† City employees excluded.

‡ "Helpers" of blacksmiths, machinists, molders, bricklayers, boiler-makers, carpenters, etc.

§ Various occupations in cotton, leather, woollens.

(with board); both monthly and yearly earnings were lowest in New Jersey and Pennsylvania, highest in New England, with New York and the West falling in between.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>12</sup> *Hunt's Merchants' Magazine*, XLI (1859), 759, quoting a report in the *New York Tribune* on the replies from its correspondents to questions on agricultural wages.

The 1,485 farmers reporting monthly wages of farm labor to the *New York Census* of 1865 (pp. 734-35), averaged \$27.18; and the 1,365 reporting yearly earnings averaged \$265. This, according to the *Census*, was a 65.6 per cent increase over 1860, which would make the averages for 1860 about \$16.50 and \$155, respectively, both with board—rather higher than those reported to the *Tribune* in 1860.

The *Sixteenth Annual Report* of the Massachusetts Department of Labor and Industries ([Boston: Wright & Potter Printing Co., 1885], pp. 318, 434) placed the daily earnings of farm labor in Massachusetts in 1860 at from \$1.00 to \$1.12; monthly, \$10.00-\$12.00 with board, or \$18.00-\$25.00, without board. The averages for the dec-

TABLE 18\*  
WAGES OF FARM LABORERS, 1859-60

STATE AND COUNTY	WAGES PER DAY		WAGES PER MONTH	
	With Board	Without Board	With Board	Without Board
<i>New York:</i>				
Westchester.....		\$0.87½		\$12.50
Westchester.....		1.00	\$12.00	
Otsego.....	\$0.62½	0.75	12.00	14.00
Otsego.....	.50		12.00	14.00
Otsego.....	.62½	0.75	12.00	
Onondaga.....	.37½		13.00	
Oswego.....	.62½		13.00	
Cayuga.....	.75		13.00	
Cayuga.....	.62½	0.87½	15.00	
Rensselaer.....	.50	0.75	15.00	
Ulster.....	.50		12.00	
Chautauqua.....	.75		13.00	
<i>Massachusetts:</i>				
Sunderland.....	.75		18.00	
<i>Connecticut:</i>				
Lebanon.....		0.75	7.00	
<i>Vermont:</i>				
Springfield.....	.67		16.00	
<i>New Jersey:</i>				
Newark.....		0.75		20.00
<i>Pennsylvania:</i>				
Bucks.....			12.00	
Christiana.....	.62½		12.00	
Indiana.....	.50		13.00	
<i>Ohio:</i>				
Richland.....	.50		13.00	
<i>Michigan:</i>				
Oakland.....	.50		12.00	
Lenawee.....	.63		12.00	
Vergennes.....	.50		13.00	
<i>Wisconsin:</i>			12.00	
<i>Illinois:</i>				
Joliet.....	.50	0.75	11.00	
Marshall.....	.50		10.00	
Kankakee.....	.50		12.00	
<i>Indiana:</i>				
Mount Vernon.....	.75		17.00	
Hendricks.....	.50		10.00	
Wayne.....	.62½		12.00	
Carroll.....	0.50		13.00	

\* Source: *Hunt's Merchants' Magazine*, XLII (1860), 641 (quoting *New York Tribune*).

Wage data from retail trade are particularly scanty. The Aldrich Report gave data from only two retail stores, both in New Hampshire—a grocery store with wages averaging \$1.09 and a dry-goods store with wages averaging 95 cents a day. They were apparently much higher than this in New York City, the *New York Tribune's* estimates of wages for retail salespersons in

TABLE 19\*

## WAGES OF SERVANTS AND FARM HANDS, 1860

State or Territory	Weekly Wages, Female Domestic with Board	Monthly Wages, Farm Hand with Board	State or Territory	Weekly Wages, Female Domestic with Board	Monthly Wages, Farm Hand with Board
Maine.....	\$1.32	\$14.34	North Carolina....	\$1.08	\$10.37
New Hampshire....	1.63	14.34	South Carolina....	1.82	11.37
Vermont.....	1.31	14.14	Georgia.....	1.67	11.95
Massachusetts.....	1.58	15.34	Florida.....	2.32	14.29
Rhode Island.....	1.50	16.04	Alabama.....	2.08	12.41
Connecticut.....	1.50	15.11	Mississippi.....	2.25	16.66
New York.....	1.25	13.19	Louisiana.....	3.36	17.00
New Jersey.....	1.23	11.91	Arkansas.....	1.91	14.25
Pennsylvania.....	1.22	12.24	Tennessee.....	1.28	11.94
Ohio.....	1.22	13.11	Kentucky.....	1.47	13.57
Indiana.....	1.28	13.71			
Illinois.....	1.46	13.72	Minnesota.....	1.58	14.10
Michigan.....	1.40	15.27	Nebraska.....	1.72	17.45
Wisconsin.....	1.30	13.96	Kansas.....	1.82	16.12
Iowa.....	1.27	13.18	Texas.....	2.50	16.02
Missouri.....	1.47	13.63	New Mexico.....	2.18	14.54
			Utah.....	2.33	23.33
Delaware.....	0.92	10.66	Washington.....	6.62	43.00
Maryland.....	1.17	9.71	Oregon.....	5.40	33.61
District of Columbia	1.55	16.00	California.....	7.45	33.28
Virginia.....	1.14	11.43			

\* Source: *Eighth Census: Mortality and Miscellaneous*, p. 512.

dry goods, groceries, and drugs averaging about \$1.60 a day. It is to be noted that the hours worked were typically much longer than in other forms of work.

The money wages paid to domestic servants seemed high at the time.<sup>12</sup> A

ade 1851-60 were, respectively, \$1.01, \$11.88, and \$21.50 (cf. Massachusetts, Department of Labor and Industries, *Tenth Annual Report for the Year 1879*, p. 67).

An estimate of the United States Department of Agriculture, reported by Miss Abbott (p. 364), placed the average daily wage for an agricultural laborer in 1860 at 97 cents a day.

<sup>12</sup> See above, pp. 175 ff.

good servant seems to have been able to get as much as \$6.00 a week, though \$3.00 or \$4.00 a week was a more common wage, even for a good cook, and an ordinary girl might get only \$1.00 or \$2.00 (see Table 19). (In the Far West, where women were scarce, wages were higher—up to \$25.00 or even \$40.00 a month and board.)

Geographical variations in wage levels can only be guessed at, though it appears that some classes of skilled labor could command wages from 25 to 50 cents a day higher in the West than in the East.<sup>13</sup> In 1858 a Chicago paper

TABLE 20\*  
WAGES IN SELECTED INDUSTRIES, 1860, BY WAGE GROUPS

WAGE CLASSES (January, 1860)	MALES†		FEMALES‡	
	Number of Employees	Percentage	Number of Employees	Percentage
\$0.25-\$0.49.....	118	2.31	139	21.99
0.50- 0.74.....	123	2.41	469	74.21
0.75- 0.99.....	599	11.72	14	2.22
1.00- 1.24.....	2,186	42.77	10	1.58
1.25- 1.49.....	542	10.61	.....	.....
1.50- 1.74.....	609	11.92	.....	.....
1.75- 1.99.....	184	3.60	.....	.....
2.00- 2.24.....	628	12.29	.....	.....
2.25- 2.49.....	66	1.29	.....	.....
2.50- 2.74.....	23	0.45	.....	.....
2.75- 2.99.....	1	0.01	.....	.....
3.00- 3.24.....	28	0.55	.....	.....
3.25- 3.49.....	1	0.01	.....	.....
3.50 and up.....	3	0.06	.....	.....
Total.....	5,111	100.00	632	100.00

\* Source: Mitchell, p. 293. † Median wage: \$1.05‡. ‡ Median wage: \$0.56.

reported that the highest wage in that city was 75 cents a day<sup>14</sup> but that was probably true, if true at all, only in the few months following the 1857 panic. Richard F. Burton reported that in Salt Lake City the wage for "hand labor"

<sup>13</sup> See the table in Mitchell, p. 332, showing wage differences between the East and the West.

<sup>14</sup> *Hunt's Merchants' Magazine*, XXXIV (1858), 766. Miss Pierce gives the following as ordinary daily wages in Chicago in 1860: blacksmiths and ironworkers, \$1.25-\$1.75; house painters, \$1.25-\$1.50; masons and plasterers, \$1.50-\$1.75; machinists, \$1.75-\$3.00; carpenters, \$1.25-\$2.00; ship carpenters, \$2.50; printers, \$1.67; shoemakers, \$7.00-\$8.00 a week; and day laborers, \$0.75-\$1.00 (II, 500). Accountants received about \$1,800 a year in the mid-fifties, though this was reduced to \$1,200 during the depression in 1857; bookkeepers received from \$600 to \$800 in 1860 (*ibid.*, II, 155).



TABLE 21\*  
WAGES IN SELECTED INDUSTRIES, 1860  
BY WAGE GROUPS

Wage Class	Number of Series	Percentage
\$0.15-\$0.49.....	63	4.4
0.50- 0.74.....	126	8.8
0.75- 0.99.....	169	11.8
1.00- 1.24.....	262	18.3
1.25- 1.49.....	191	13.3
1.50- 1.74.....	254	18.1
1.75- 1.99.....	108	7.5
2.00- 2.24.....	120	8.4
2.25- 2.49.....	28	2.0
2.50- 3.99.....	89	6.2
4.00- 6.99.....	19	1.3
Under \$1.00.....	358	25.1
\$1.00- 1.49.....	453	31.7
1.50- 1.99.....	362	25.3
2.00- 2.49.....	148	10.4
2.50 and up.....	108	7.6
Total.....	1,429	100.0

\* Source: Mitchell, p. 332 (original data from *Tenth Census*).

TABLE 22\*  
INDEX NUMBERS FOR REAL WAGES, 1820-1900

YEAR	INDEX NUMBERS†			YEAR	INDEX NUMBERS		
	Money Wages	Cost of Living	Real Wages		Money Wages	Cost of Living	Real Wages
1820.....	36	88	41	1870.....	84	119	71
1830.....	37	72	51	1880.....	66	86	77
1840.....	41	80	51	1890.....	74	77	96
1850.....	43	73	59	1900.....	77	76	101
1860.....	47	82	57				

\* Source: Alvin H. Hansen, "Factors Affecting the Trend of Real Wages," *American Economic Review*, XV (1925), 32. I have transcribed only the figures for decennial years. The wages are daily or weekly wages, not annual earnings, for which the trend was somewhat different. In 1859 the index number for real wages was 54 (money wages, 46; cost of living, 85), while that for real annual earnings was 59 (*ibid.*, p. 33).

† 1913 = 100.

was \$2.00 a day.<sup>15</sup> On the Pacific Coast wages continued throughout the fifties and sixties to be much higher than in the East.<sup>16</sup>

All the foregoing data on incomes and the data for prices in the text are in terms of dollars and cents. For the benefit of those who find index numbers an aid to understanding tendencies and trends I include (Table 22) extracts from tables computed by Alvin H. Hansen, showing index numbers of wages, the cost of living, and real wages, from 1820 to the end of the century.

A recent estimate by the National Industrial Conference Board<sup>17</sup> puts the average per capita, in 1926 dollars, at \$300 in 1859. This is a considerable increase over the \$211 average for 1799, and an even greater increase over the low point of \$166 in 1829; by 1900, however, the average had risen to \$459 and reached its peak of \$625 in 1929.

<sup>15</sup> P. 388.

<sup>16</sup> A table of wages paid in San Francisco in July and August, 1853, is included in Soulé, Gihon, and Nisbet, p. 459. Daily wages ranged from \$5.00 for tailors up to \$10.00-\$15.00 for printers. Shoemakers, teamsters, and steamboat firemen received \$100.00 a month or more, and farm hands \$50.00 and found. That wage levels there were still relatively high a decade or so later is evident from Mrs. Sutherland's account.

<sup>17</sup> *Studies in Enterprise and Social Progress* (New York, 1939), cited by Wright, p. 1062.

# APPENDIX C

## FOOD PRICES AND FOOD CONSUMPTION

TABLE 23\*  
CONSUMPTION OF MILK IN THIRTEEN STATES FOR  
YEAR ENDING JUNE 30, 1860

STATE	FLUID MILK CONSUMED		MILK MANUFACTURED	
	Millions of Quarts	Quarts per Capita	Into Butter (Millions of Quarts)	Into Cheese (Millions of Quarts)
Maine.....	112	178	146	7
New Hampshire.....	75	230	87	9
Vermont.....	81	258	196	32
Massachusetts.....	136	110	104	21
Rhode Island.....	22	123	13	1
Connecticut.....	64	138	99	15
New York.....	543	140	1,289	191
New Jersey.....	110	163	139	1
Pennsylvania.....	554	191	649	10
Delaware.....	23	203	18	†
Maryland.....	96	140	74	†
Virginia.....	406	254	188	1
Wisconsin.....	174	225	171	4
Total.....	2,395	174	3,172	291
Total Percentage..	41%	.....	54%	5%

\* Source: *Hunt's Merchants' Magazine*, XLVII (1862), 444. Per capita figures were not in the original but have been computed on the basis of the 1860 Census. (Column totals differ slightly from the sums of the individual items, because all have been rounded off.)

† Less than one-half million.

## THE STANDARD OF LIVING IN 1860

TABLE 24\*

## RETAIL MEAT PRICES, MASSACHUSETTS, 1860

Kind of Meat	Price per Pound (Cents)
<i>Beef:</i>	
Corned.....	10
Round.....	10
Rump.....	12½
Steak.....	18
Sirloin	
best.....	17
tips.....	12½
<i>Veal:</i>	
Cutlet.....	18
Shoulder.....	12½
<i>Lamb:</i>	
Hind quarter.....	12½
<i>Mutton:</i>	
Chops.....	12½
Leg.....	12½
<i>Pork:</i>	
Whole hog.....	9
Fresh pork.....	12½
Salt pork.....	10
<i>Sausages</i> .....	12½
<i>Smoked ham</i> .....	14
<i>Turkey</i> .....	12½-17
<i>Fish:</i>	
Halibut.....	12
Herring (dozen).....	8
Mackerel.....	8½-12
Salmon.....	12½
Salt fish.....	5
Cod.....	5
<i>Lard</i> .....	15

\* Source: Massachusetts, Department of Labor and Industries, *Annual Report for the Year 1885*, *passim*. I have included this and the immediately following tables, because the Massachusetts data appear to be relatively free from local and seasonal variations. There are other prices which I have not included, of which the more important are: coffee, 12½-23 cents a pound; cider, 10 cents a gallon; brown sugar, 8½ cents a pound; and granulated sugar, 10½ cents; and molasses, 51-58 cents a gallon. The *Annual Report for the Year 1870* (p. 81) gives a less detailed summary of food prices in Massachusetts.

Tables 28-32 have been included for contrast. The list could have been indefinitely extended by drawing upon price data included in local histories; and there is a considerable mass of retail-price data, though not very well selected, in the *Tenth Census of the United States, 1880: Report on the Average Retail Prices of Necessities of Life*, XX (Washington, 1886), 23-89.

TABLE 25\*  
RETAIL PRICES OF DAIRY PRODUCTS  
AND EGGS, MASSACHUSETTS, 1860

Product	Price (Cents)	Product	Price (Cents)
Milk (qt.).....	5	Cheese (lb.).....	14
Butter (lb.).....	23-29	Eggs (doz.).....	17-27

\* Source: *Annual Report for the Year 1885*, pp. 358-60 (cf. *Annual Report for the Year 1879*, p. 81).

TABLE 26\*  
RETAIL PRICES OF CEREAL PRODUCTS  
MASSACHUSETTS, 1860

Product	Price	Product	Price
White flour (bbl.)..	\$8.75-\$9.50	Rye meal (lb.).....	\$0.02½†
Graham flour (bbl.).....	9.50†	Bread (loaf).....	0.07½†
Corn meal (lb.).....	0.02	Crackers (lb.).....	0.11
Rice (lb.).....	0.06†	Hominy (lb.).....	0.05
Oatmeal (lb.).....	0.09†	Macaroni (lb.).....	0.19

\* Source: *Annual Report for the Year 1885*, *passim* (cf. *Annual Report for the Year 1879*, p. 81).

† Average, 1851-60.

TABLE 27\*  
RETAIL PRICES OF FRUITS AND VEGETABLES  
MASSACHUSETTS, 1851-60

Product	Average Price	Product	Average Price
Irish potatoes (bu.).....	\$0.86	Lemons (doz.).....	\$0.27
Sweet potatoes (lb.).....	0.32	Oranges (doz.).....	0.28
Beans (bu.).....	2.60	Prunes (lb.).....	0.11
Onions (bu.).....	0.94	Raisins (lb.).....	0.14
Turnips (bu.).....	0.33½	Currants (lb.).....	0.22
Squashes (lb.).....	0.01½	Dried apples (lb.).....	0.11
Apples (bbl.).....	1.96	Figs (lb.).....	0.17

\* Source: *Annual Report for the Year 1885*, pp. 436-37.

TABLE 28\*  
RETAIL FOOD PRICES, ILLINOIS, JANUARY, 1856

Product	Price	Product	Price
Potatoes (bu.).....	\$0.20-\$1.00	Cheese (lb.).....	\$0.08-\$0.16
Hams (lb.).....	0.07- 0.15	Turkeys (each).....	0.50- 1.00
Shoulders (lb.).....	0.06- 0.12½	Geese (each).....	0.30- 0.60
Pork (cwt.).....	3.00- 8.00	Ducks (doz.).....	1.25- 2.50
Beef (lb.).....	0.04- 0.08	Chickens (doz.).....	1.25- 2.25
Mutton (lb.).....	0.03- 0.05	Prairie fowl (doz.)....	1.75- 2.25
Butter (lb.).....	0.15- 0.30		

\* Source: Fred Gerhard, *Illinois as It Is* (Chicago: Keen & Lee, 1857), pp. 374-75. A few food prices for Chicago are given in Pierce, II, 463-64.

## THE STANDARD OF LIVING IN 1860

TABLE 29\*

## RETAIL FOOD PRICES, LAWRENCE, KANSAS, SEPTEMBER 22, 1855

Product	Price	Product	Price
Corn meal (50 lb.).....	\$1.50	Eggs (doz.).....	\$0.25
Beans (bu.).....	4.00	Coarse salt (bu.).....	1.50
Flour (cwt.).....	5.00-5.50	Sugar, New Orleans (lb.)	0.09-0.11
Dried peaches (bu.) ...	3.50	Sugar, crushed (lb.)....	0.15
Butter (lb.).....	0.25	Sugar, white (lb.).....	0.12
Beef (lb.).....	0.07-0.09	Molasses (gal.) .....	0.75
Pickled pork (lb.).....	0.15	Rice (lb.).....	0.12½
Lard (lb.).....	0.12½	Codfish (lb.).....	0.10
Crackers (lb.).....	0.15	Coffee (lb.).....	0.14-0.17
Cheese (lb.).....	0.15-0.20	Tea (lb.).....	0.70-1.00

\* Source: C. W. Dana, *The Great West* (Boston: Wentworth & Co., 1857), p. 193.

TABLE 30\*

## RETAIL FOOD PRICES, DENVER, JULY 9, 1859

Product	Price	Product	Price
Flour, U.S. (cwt.)...	\$14.00-\$16.00	Rice (lb.).....	\$0.25
Flour, Mexican		Butter (lb.).....	0.75
(cwt.).....	10.00-15.00	Lard (lb.).....	0.50
Corn meal (cwt.)....	12.00	Cheese (lb.).....	0.50
Bacon and ham (lb.)	0.35	Crackers (lb.).....	0.25
Sugar (lb.).....	0.20-0.25	Bread (loaf) .....	0.15
Coffee (lb.).....	0.25	Fresh beef (lb.) .....	0.12-0.15
Soda (lb.).....	0.35	Venison (each).....	1.25
Salt (lb.).....	0.15	Milk (qt.).....	0.10
Beans (lb.).....	0.15	Molasses (gal.).....	2.50
Onions (lb.).....	0.25	Coffee (lb.).....	0.25
Potatoes (lb.).....	0.25		

\* Source: L. R. Hafen, "Supplies and Market Prices in Pioneer Denver," *Colorado Magazine*, IV (1927) 135-42. Other prices for 1859 and 1860 are also given.

TABLE 31\*

## RETAIL FOOD PRICES, CHINA TOWN, NEVADA, JUNE 11, 1859

Product	Price (Cents)	Product	Price (Cents)
Sugar (lb.).....	33½	Potatoes (lb.).....	8
Coffee (lb.).....	33½	Flour (lb.).....	16
Beef (lb.).....	17-18	Barley (lb.).....	10
Bacon (lb.).....	37½	Oats (lb.).....	10

\* Source: Capt. J. H. Simpson, *Report of Exploration across the Great Basin of the Territory of Utah in 1859* (Washington: Government Printing Office, 1876), p. 90. China Town was a mining town of about fifty Chinese, on the Carson River.

TABLE 32\*

## RETAIL FOOD PRICES, SALT LAKE CITY, 1860

Product	Price	Product	Price
Peas and beans (bu.)...	\$2.00	Beef, forequarter (lb.)	\$0.06
Potatoes (bu.).....	0.75	Pork (lb.).....	0.12½ - \$0.20
Beets (bu.).....	0.50	Lard (lb.).....	0.15 - 0.20
Carrots (bu.).....	0.50	Mutton (lb.).....	0.08 - 0.12½
Parsnips (bu.).....	0.50	Veal (lb.).....	0.03 - 0.05
Onions (bu.).....	2.00	Bear (lb.).....	0.08 - 0.12½
Turnips (bu.).....	0.25	Tea (lb.).....	1.50 - 3.50
Tomatoes (bu.).....	1.00	Coffee (lb.).....	0.40 - 0.60
Cabbages (each).....	0.02-0.10	Sugar (lb.).....	0.35 - 0.60
Pumpkins and squash		Milk (qt.).....	0.10
(each).....	0.02-0.08	Eggs (doz.).....	0.18
Melons (each).....	0.02-0.10	Butter (lb.).....	0.25
Cucumbers (each).....	0.01	Cheese (lb.).....	0.12½ - 0.25
Pigs, four weeks old		Salt, fine (lb.).....	0.04
(each).....	3.00	Salt, coarse (lb.)....	0.10
Chickens (each).....	0.10-0.25	Molasses (gal.).....	3.00
Ducks (each).....	0.15-0.25	Vinegar (gal.).....	0.50 - 0.75
Beef, av. (lb.).....	0.06½	Doves (each).....	0.12½
Beef, hindquarter (lb.)	0.07	Turkeys (each).....	1.50 - 2.50

\* Source: Burton, p. 389, quoting *Prices Current* of the General Tithing Office (date not given).

## APPENDIX D

### RENTS, HOUSING COSTS, AND RELATED PRICES

#### ADDITIONAL DATA ON HOUSING COSTS

*Construction costs.*—Tables 35 and 36 present in tabular form estimated construction costs and other information taken from two books published by architects during the fifties. The estimates apply particularly to the East; but the authors seemed to think that prices would not be greatly different in

TABLE 33\*  
AVERAGE MONTHLY HOUSE RENT IN MANU-  
FACTURING TOWNS, 1860-61

State	Four-Room Tenements	Six-Room Tenements
Maine.....	\$3.25	\$4.67
New Hampshire, Vermont.....	2.42	3.17
Massachusetts.....	5.86	6.54
Rhode Island.....	5.93	9.11
Connecticut.....	4.04	4.56
New York.....	4.20	5.78
Pennsylvania.....	5.60	8.00
New Jersey.....	4.67	7.17
Delaware.....	4.00	5.17
Average.....	\$4.44	\$6.02

\* Source: Mitchell, *History of the Greenbacks*, p. 354, from material in Edward Young, *H.R. Exec. Doc. No. 16* (40th Cong. 3d sess.), Appen D., pp. 118-21.

The advertising columns of the newspapers of the fifties contain thousands of offers for rental or sale, but it is almost impossible to summarize such data, and it has not seemed wise to try to include any of it in this Appendix.

the South—perhaps slightly lower for brick and wood. There is no way of knowing how accurate these estimates were. Similar estimates from scattered sources are given on pp. 422-23, 427, below.

Downing suggested in his *Rural Essays* (1853) that in the East a small country cottage, sturdily built of wood with sidings of strong rough boards, tongued and grooved, laid vertically and with the joints covered with inch-boards, could be built for from \$200 to \$500.



Calvert Vaux gave a few estimates in "Hints for Country Home Builders," published in *Harper's Magazine* for November, 1855.<sup>1</sup> A two-story wood cottage, with unfinished attic and basement, would cost about \$1,500, not including painting. The carpenters' and masons' contracts for a three-story brick suburban house would run about \$3,500. A two-story double house, with finished attic and basement, could be built for \$5,000. Contracts for a story-and-a-half cottage would be about \$2,900. A two-story wood villa, with eleven rooms and finished attic and basement, water closet and bath, would cost about \$7,530 (contracts \$6,000).

TABLE 34\*  
MONTHLY HOUSE RENT IN VARIOUS CITIES, 1860

State and City	Four Rooms	Six Rooms
Jewett City, Conn.....	\$1.75-\$2.25	\$2.75-\$3.25
Boston, Mass.....	5.00	9.00
Oswego, N.Y.....	6.00	8.00
Camden, N.J.....	6.50	8.00
Hokendauqua, Pa.....	.....	3.42
Canton, Ohio.....	6.25	7.00
Cincinnati, Ohio.....	6.00	8.00
Springfield, Ohio.....	5.00	6.00
Zanesville, Ohio.....	7.00	9.00
Aurora, Ind.....	4.00	5.00
LaFayette, Ind.....	6.00	8.00
Lawrenceburg, Ind.....	7.00	10.00
Rock Island, Ill.....	10.00	12.00
Pilot Knob, Mo.....	5.00	.....
St. Louis, Mo.....	10.00	15.00
Baltimore, Md.....	.....	14.88†
New Cumberland, Va.....	4.00	6.00

\* Source: *Tenth Census*, XX, 105-7. The Massachusetts Bureau of Labor and Industries (*Annual Report for the Year 1870*, p. 81) estimated the average rents in Massachusetts in 1860 to be \$4.45 for a four-room tenement, \$7.54 for a six-room tenement.

† 1859.

*Godey's Lady's Book* estimated that a two-and-a-half-story model cottage, in Gothic or Italian style, with nine rooms, bath, water closet, spring water in kitchen and bath, and gas in all rooms, would cost, built as a double house, \$700 each.<sup>2</sup> It gave plans for a two-story, six-room frame cottage, for which the estimated cost was \$550.<sup>3</sup>

The *Southern Cultivator* described a four-room (two bedrooms, living-room, parlor), one-story cottage, with a hallway running all the way through and a

<sup>1</sup> *Harper's Magazine*, XI (1855), 763-78.

<sup>2</sup> LI (1855), 240-41.

<sup>3</sup> *Ibid.*, LX (1860), 567.

TABLE 35\*

## ESTIMATED CONSTRUCTION COSTS FOR COUNTRY HOUSES, 1851

DESCRIPTION	ESTIMATED COST	No. Rooms				FEATURES		
		Basement	Ground floor	Chamber floors	Attic	Baths	Water Closets	Heating
Small cottage, wood.....	\$ 330-\$ 400	†	2	2	0	0	0	††
Small cottage, wood.....	400- 512	†	2	3	0	0	0	††
Cottage, wood.....	600- 975	†	3	5	0	0	0	††
Gothic cottage, brick and stone.....	1,000- 1,200	†	2	3	0	0	0	††
Cottage, wood.....	600	†	4	4	0	0	0	††
Gate lodge, brick and stone.....	1,360	†	2	4	0	0	0	††
Cottage, wood.....	835	...	3	5	0	0	0	††
Italian cottage, brick and stone.....	2,000	†	3	5	0	0	0	††
Cottage, wood.....	1,278	†	3	5	0	0	0	††
Cottage, wood.....	1,356	†	5	5	0	0	0	††
Swiss cottage, shingled.....	2,600	†	3	3	0	0	1	††
Suburban cottage, wood.....	500- 760	...	3	4	0	0	0	††
Tuscan cottage, brick and stone.....	1,300	†	4	4	0	0	0	††
Farmhouse, stone and rough cast.....	1,200	†	4	4	†	0	0	††
Swiss farmhouse, wood.....	1,200- 1,440	†	3	6	0	0	0	††
Farmhouse, wood.....	2,000	†	3	6	3	0	0	††
English farmhouse, brick and stone...	1,800- 2,500	†	4	4	0	0	0	††
Farmhouse, wood.....	1,676- 2,000	†	4	5	3	0	0	††
Farmhouse, stone or brick and stone..	2,500	†	4	8	§	0	0	††
Villa farmhouse, stone.....	4,000- 5,000	...	4	6	0	0	0	†
Small country house, wood.....	3,025- 4,300	...	4	5	0	0	0	...
Norman villa, stone.....	7,500	...	4	5	0	0	1	...
Italian villa, wood.....	3,800	†	4	7	0	1	0	...
Italian villa, brick and stone.....	4,600	†	4	7	0	1	0	...
Small classical villa, wood.....	2,300	...	4	6	2	0	0	...
Gothic cottage-villa, brick and stone..	6,000	...	4	§	0	0	0	...
Timber cottage-villa.....	2,800	...	5	6	0	0	0	...
Gothic country house, brick or stone..	6,000- 7,000	...	6	5	0	1	1	
Small country house, wood.....	2,500- 3,000	...	4	5	2	0	0	...
Gothic villa, brick, brick and stone...	7,500	†	5	5	4	1	1	...
Country house, brick or stone.....	13,000	...	8	12	10	1	1	...
Gothic villa, brick or stone.....	10,000	...	6	8	4	0	1	...
Lake villa, stone.....	12,000	...	5	9	§	1	1	...
Romanesque villa, brick or stone.....	14,000	...	6	9	1	1	1	...

\* Source: Downing, *Country Houses* (there are other estimates in his *Cottage Residences* [4th ed., 1863]). Inside walls plastered with two coats, finished with brown coat ready for final finishing. Estimates do not include outside painting. When wood, walls are filled in. Height of rooms varies: cottages usually ten feet on first floor, eight and a half or nine on second; farmhouses usually ten to thirteen feet on first, nine to ten on second; villas usually twelve to fourteen feet on first floor, nine to twelve on second with ventilation above.

Estimates for farmhouses include dairy or milkrooms, woodsheds, and other appurtenances but do not include stable, which would add \$190-\$350.

When costs vary, allowance is made for differences in costs in different parts of the country; when only one cost is given it applies to rural New York.

† Unfinished.

‡ Heated by stoves and fireplaces.

§ Finished, but number of rooms not given.

|| Furnace heating.

TABLE 36\*  
ESTIMATED CONSTRUCTION COSTS, 1857

DESCRIPTION	ESTIMATED COST	No. Rooms				FEATURES		
		Basement	Ground floor	Chamber floors	Attic	Baths	Water closets	Heating
Suburban cottage, wood.....	\$1,500-\$1,600	†	3	3	†	0	0	...
Rural double cottage, wood.....	1,800	1	3	4	...	0	0	...
Suburban cottage, wood.....	4,000	2	3	3	2	0	0	...
Rural cottage, wood.....	2,900	2	2	4	†	0	0	...
Suburban house, brick.....	3,000	2	2	4	2	0	0	...
Double cottage, brick.....	5,000	2	4	6	6	0	0	†
Cottage, brick, wood, or stone.....	3,000	1	2	3	2	1	1	...
Cottage.....	4,200	†	4	5	2	0	0	...
Country house, brick.....	6,000§	†	4	7	...	1	1	†
Country house, brick.....	6,800§	†	4	5	3	1	0	†
Suburban house, brick.....	7,475	...	4	6	...	2	1	...
Villa, wood.....	10,500	...	4	9	2	1	2	...
Country house.....	9,327	1	4	5	4	1	2	†
Villa, brick.....	7,000	...	4	6	1	1	1	...
House.....	11,968	2	4	4	3	1	1	†
Square house.....	12,000	...	3	4	4	1	1	...
Suburban villa.....	10,000§	...	3	7	1	1	1	...
Villa residence.....	12,000	1	5		...	...	...	...
Suburban villa, brick.....	10,000	2	3	4		1	1	...
Country house, brick.....	7,700§	1	5	7	5	1	1	†
Rural cottage.....	3,470	2	2	4	...	0	0	...
Villa, brick.....	10,000		4	8	2	1	1	†
Suburban house, brick.....	10,000	1	3	6	6	1	2	†
Villa, brick and stone.....	16,000	...	5		...	...	...	...
Stone house.....	13,200	3	4	7	5	1	2	†
Farm cottage, wood.....	1,400-1,500		4	3	...	...	...	...
Villa, brick.....	15,000	...	5	9	3	1	2	...
Villa.....	16,000	...	5	9		1	3	...
Town house, brick.....	20,000	1	3	4	...	2	2	...
Marine villa.....	20,000	...	7	13	...	1	2	...
Villa, stone.....	30,000	...	8	13	...	1	3	...
Villa.....	60,000	...	11		...	...	...	...

\* Source: Vaux, *Villas and Cottages, passim*.

† Unfinished.

‡ Furnace heating.

§ Carpenters' and masons' contracts only.

|| Finished, number of rooms not stated.

TABLE 37\*  
RETAIL PRICE OF COAL PER TON  
IN VARIOUS CITIES, 1860

State and City	Anthracite	Bituminous
Boston, Mass.....	\$5.50-\$6.50	\$5.75
Oswego, N.Y.....	4.00	.....
Canton, Ohio.....	.....	2.00
Ravenna, Ohio.....	.....	3.50
Zanesville, Ohio.....	3.00	1.50
Lawrenceburg, Ind.....	.....	3.50
Belleville, Ill. ....	.....	1.82
Rock Island, Ill.....	.....	3.12
New Cumberland, Va.....	.....	1.40

\* Source: *Tenth Census*, XX, 95-97.

TABLE 38\*  
RETAIL PRICE OF WOOD PER CORD  
IN VARIOUS CITIES, 1860

State and City	Hard	Pine
Danielson, Conn.....	\$4.00	\$3.50
Jewett City, Conn.....	3.50	.....
Wauregan, Conn.....	3.75	3.00†
Boston, Mass.....	6.50	4.00
Homer, N.Y.....	1.12½	.....
Oswego, N.Y.....	7.00	.....
Canton, Ohio.....	2.50	.....
Ravenna, Ohio.....	2.50	.....
Springfield, Ohio.....	3.00	.....
Zanesville, Ohio.....	1.50	1.00
Lawrenceburg, Ind.....	4.00	.....
Rock Island, Ill.....	4.50	.....
Pilot Knob, Mo.....	2.50	.....
New Cumberland, Va.....	1.75	1.50

\* Source: *Tenth Census*, XX, 99-101.

† Chestnut.

veranda all the way around. This cottage, suitable for a small planter or overseer, would cost from \$650 to \$700, built of wood.<sup>4</sup> The *New England Farmer* described a two-story country house, the rooms in the lower story nine and a half feet high, those in the upper, eight feet, which was to be built of frame or brick, the roof covered with boarding, over which roofing (paper, cloth, or tin) was to be laid. The cost would be \$1,300-\$1,400.<sup>5</sup> A three-room house could be built for \$650.<sup>6</sup> The *Country Gentleman* called attention to a five-room house, one-and-a-half story with cellar, which could be built for \$250-\$300; a six-room house, which would cost \$400-\$500; and another six-room house, two-story, which would cost \$600-\$800.<sup>7</sup>

<sup>4</sup> XVII (1859), 104, referring to *The House* (New York: Fowler & Wells).

<sup>5</sup> IX (1857), 80-81, citing Wheeler, *Homes for the People*.

<sup>6</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 208, citing *Village and Farm Cottages*.

<sup>7</sup> XV (January 5, 1860), 18-19, the details for all three being from George D. Rand in the *Annual Register of Rural Affairs for 1860* (Albany: Luther Tucker & Son).

# APPENDIX E

## PRICE OF BOARD IN 1860

TABLE 39\*  
PRICE OF BOARD PER WEEK TO LABORING MAN BY STATES, 1860

The North		The South		The Frontier	
Maine.....	\$2.06	Delaware.....	\$2.06	Minnesota.....	\$2.50
New Hampshire..	2.07	Maryland.....	2.38	Dakota.....	2.86
Vermont.....	2.00	District of Co-		Nebraska.....	2.90
Massachusetts...	2.51	lumbia.....	2.65	Kansas.....	2.92
Rhode Island....	2.47	Virginia.....	1.98	Texas.....	4.27
Connecticut.....	2.61	North Carolina..	1.84	Colorado.....	3.68
New York.....	2.24	South Carolina..	2.08	New Mexico....	6.29
New Jersey.....	2.84	Georgia.....	2.22	Utah.....	4.97
Pennsylvania....	2.20	Florida.....	3.58	Nevada.....	6.25
Ohio.....	2.12	Alabama.....	2.68	Washington....	
Indiana.....	2.09	Mississippi.....	2.92	Oregon.....	
Illinois.....	2.17	Louisiana.....	3.52	California.....	
Michigan.....	2.31	Arkansas.....	2.48		
Wisconsin.....	2.25	Tennessee.....	1.86		
Iowa.....	2.08	Kentucky.....	1.94		
Missouri.....	2.01				

\* Source: *Eighth Census: Mortality and Miscellaneous*, p. 512. The Census report does not indicate the methods used in obtaining the information, and the statistical techniques employed were evidently crude.

TABLE 40\*  
 PRICE OF BOARD PER WEEK  
 IN VARIOUS CITIES, 1860

City	Man	Woman
Jewett City, Conn.....	\$2.00	\$1.50
Wauregan, Conn.....	2.00	1.50
Oswego, N.Y.....	3.00	.....
Sharon, Pa.....	2.50	2.00
Canton, Ohio.....	2.50	2.50
Cincinnati, Ohio.....	1.75	1.50
Springfield, Ohio.....	2.50	2.50
Zanesville, Ohio.....	2.75	2.00
Aurora, Ind.....	2.50	.....
Lawrenceburg, Ind.....	3.50	.....
Pilot Knob, Mo.....	3.00	3.00
New Cumberland, Va.....	1.50	1.25
Louisville, Ky.....	4.00	3.00

\* Source: *Tenth Census, XX, 109-11*. The prices given are not averages but were actual prices charged, as reported to the Census—supposedly after reference to written records—twenty years later.

# APPENDIX F

## CLOTHING PRICES IN 1860

TABLE 41\*

ADVERTISED PRICES, MEN'S FALL AND WINTER CLOTHING

OCTOBER 24, 1860

Article of Clothing	Price
<i>Overcoats:</i>	
Black and fancy cloth.....	\$ 5.00-\$18.00
Black and fancy beaver.....	8.00- 24.00
Black and fancy pilot cloth.....	6.00- 16.00
Others.....	3.50 and up
<i>Coats:</i>	
Good black cloth frocks.....	5.00- 8.00
Fine black cloth frocks.....	10.00- 14.00
Super black cloth frocks.....	15.00- 20.00
Business coats.....	3.50- 15.00
<i>Pants:</i>	
Black doeskin, cloth, cassimere.....	2.50- 6.00
Fancy cassimere, pilot, beaver.....	2.00- 6.00
Extra fancy and black.....	7.00 and up
<i>Vests:</i>	
Velvet.....	2.00- 8.00
Silk and satins.....	1.50- 5.00
Cloth and cassimere.....	1.00- 3.00
<i>Suits:</i>	
Complete black cloth.....	10.00- 30.00
Cassimere.....	8.00- 20.00

\* Source: Advertisement of Evans' Clothing Warehouse in the *New York Independent*, October 24, 1860.



TABLE 42\*

## ADVERTISED PRICES, MEN'S SUMMER CLOTHING

JUNE 27, 1857

Article of Clothing	Price
Cassimere suits (three-piece).....	\$ 8.00-\$10.00
Black cloth suits.....	12.00- 25.00
Check Marseilles suits.....	4.00- 8.00
White duck suits.....	6.00- 12.00
Thin suits.....	2.50 and up
Black alpaca suits.....	5.00- 10.00
"Elegant Everlasting Drap d'été Coats" ..	4.00- 14.00
Alpaca coats.....	1.50- 6.00
Cassimere business coats.....	2.50- 10.00
Black cloth frock coats.....	5.50- 20.00
White duck coats.....	2.50- 6.00
Summer coats of every description.....	0.75- 5.00
Endless variety of fancy cassimere pants..	1.50- 6.00
Black pants.....	2.50- 6.00
Summer pants of every description.....	0.75- 8.00

\* Source: Advertisement in *Harper's Weekly*, I (June 27, 1857), 415.

# APPENDIX G

## STATISTICS RELATING TO LEISURE EDUCATION, AND READING

TABLE 43\*

LENGTH OF WORKING DAY IN VARIOUS INDUSTRIES, 1860

Industry	Number Employed	Average Number Hours in Working Day
Agricultural implements. ....	2,390	10.0
Ale, beer, and porter. ....	6,307	12.0
Books and newspapers. ....	23,106	10.0
Building trades. ....	363,995	10.1
Carriages and wagons. ....	238	10.0
City public works. ....	.....	10.4
Cotton goods. ....	29,212	12.2
Dry goods (clerks). ....	184,485	11.0
Illuminating gas. ....	.....	10.4
Leather. ....	13,707	11.0
Lumber. ....	15,929	10.8
Metals and metallic goods. ....	42,965	10.1
Paper. ....	5,180	12.0
Railroads. ....	36,567	10.0
Stone. ....	19,497	10.0
White lead. ....	752	9.3
Woolen goods. ....	23,324	12.2
Ginghams. ....	.....	11.1
Groceries (clerks). ....	.....	11.0
Sidewalks. ....	.....	10.3
Spices. ....	.....	10.0
All industries. ....	.....	11.0

\* Source: *Aldrich Report*, II, 175, 178-79. (The average working day for all industries had been 11.4 hours in 1840 and did not fall to 10.0 hours until 1890.)

TABLE 44\*  
 LENGTH OF WORKING DAY IN 350 FIRMS  
 BY STATES, 1860

STATE	NUMBER OF FIRMS REPORTING WORKING DAY OF					
	8.0-8.9 Hours	9.0-9.9 Hours	10.0-10.9 Hours	11.0-11.9 Hours	12.0-12.9 Hours	13.0-13.9 Hours
Maine.....	0	0	4	2	1	0
New Hampshire.....	0	0	7	6	0	0
Vermont.....	0	0	0	0	1	0
Massachusetts.....	0	5	19	9	1	1
Rhode Island.....	0	0	0	2	0	0
Connecticut.....	1	0	13	6	3	0
New York.....	3	5	42	7	9	1
New Jersey.....	1	1	11	0	1	0
Pennsylvania.....	1	4	18	3	11	2
Ohio.....	2	2	24	5	5	2
Indiana.....	0	1	13	1	3	1
Illinois.....	0	0	7	2	1	0
Michigan.....	0	0	3	1	3	0
Wisconsin.....	1	1	5	1	1	0
Iowa.....	1	0	8	1	2	0
Missouri.....	1	0	8	1	2	0
Delaware.....	0	0	2	1	2	0
Maryland.....	0	0	4	1	4	1
Virginia.....	1	1	3	1	1	0
North Carolina.....	0	1	5	0	4	0
Georgia.....	0	0	0	0	2	0
Tennessee.....	0	0	1	0	0	0
Kentucky.....	0	1	6	0	0	0
Kansas.....	0	0	1	0	0	0
California.....	1	0	3	0	2	0
Total.....	13	22	200	49	58	8
Percentage.....	3.7	6.3	57.1	14.0	16.6	2.3

\* Source: *Tenth Census*, XX, xxviii, xxxi-xxxiii. The reports are also classified by industries.

**TABLE 45\***  
**SCHOOL ATTENDANCE IN 1860**

STATE AND SECTION	NUMBER ATTENDING PER HUNDRED PERSONS		
	White (All Ages)	White (Age, 5-19)	Free Colored (All Ages)
<i>The North:</i>	23.0	66.6	12.8
Maine.....	30.3	88.5	22.0
New Hampshire.....	25.5	83.5	16.2
Vermont.....	25.2	77.3	16.2
Massachusetts.....	20.3	68.7	16.8
Rhode Island.....	18.2	59.6	13.5
Connecticut.....	19.7	66.5	16.0
New York.....	20.9	64.5	11.6
New Jersey.....	18.0	54.2	10.8
Pennsylvania.....	23.2	65.3	13.3
Ohio.....	26.1	70.5	15.5
Indiana.....	25.2	66.4	9.8
Illinois.....	23.8	66.0	8.0
Michigan.....	25.4	73.5	16.3
Wisconsin.....	23.9	68.2	9.6
Iowa.....	24.9	68.0	12.9
Missouri.....	19.1	51.3	4.4
<i>The South:</i>	17.1	44.5	1.4
Delaware.....	20.4	56.5	1.3
Maryland.....	15.2	43.0	1.6
District of Columbia.....	14.9	46.3	6.1
Virginia.....	14.8	39.4	0.1
North Carolina.....	18.5	49.0	0.4
South Carolina.....	15.9	41.7	7.7
Georgia.....	16.0	40.0	0.2
Florida.....	11.9	27.9	1.0
Alabama.....	18.6	45.8	4.2
Mississippi.....	18.8	47.0	0.3
Louisiana.....	13.4	39.1	1.5
Arkansas.....	13.2	32.0	3.5
Tennessee.....	19.7	50.2	0.7
Kentucky.....	20.1	51.6	2.0
<i>The Frontier:</i>	11.9	39.8	3.5
Minnesota.....	14.2	46.8	7.0
Dakota.....	11.5	30.8	.....
Nebraska.....	11.5	38.3	3.0
Kansas.....	12.5	36.6	2.2
Texas.....	15.1	40.0	3.1
New Mexico.....	17.7	50.0	0.0
Utah.....	19.8	57.9	0.0
Washington.....	9.8	51.3	0.0
Oregon.....	20.7	64.0	1.5
California.....	8.0	42.7	3.7
All states.....	21.0	59.7	6.7

\* Source: School-attendance figures from *Eighth Census: Mortality and Miscellaneous*, p. 507; population figures from the *Population* volume of the same Census. There were no returns from Colorado or Nevada; and no free Negroes in Dakota.

TABLE 46\*  
LIBRARY FACILITIES IN 1860, BY SECTION AND STATE

SECTION AND STATE	NUMBER OF LIBRARIES	NUMBER OF VOLUMES	VOLUMES PER CAPITA	
			All Persons	White Per- sons 10 and Over
<i>The North:</i>	22,219	10,087,594	0.56	0.79
Maine.....	814	405,901	0.65	0.85
New Hampshire.....	306	237,312	0.73	0.92
Vermont.....	336	167,429	0.53	0.69
Massachusetts.....	1,852	1,997,151	1.62	2.06
Rhode Island.....	302	465,419	2.62	3.44
Connecticut.....	490	404,206	0.88	1.15
New York.....	8,360	2,436,576	0.63	0.85
New Jersey.....	725	433,321	0.65	0.92
Pennsylvania.....	1,416	1,344,924	0.46	0.65
Ohio.....	3,082	790,666	0.34	0.48
Indiana.....	1,123	467,062	0.35	0.51
Illinois.....	854	244,394	0.14	0.21
Michigan.....	1,120	250,686	0.33	0.47
Wisconsin.....	599	150,559	0.19	0.29
Iowa.....	530	107,104	0.14	0.24
Missouri.....	310	184,884	0.15	0.25
<i>The South:</i>	5,048	2,906,286	0.29	0.63
Delaware.....	114	88,470	0.79	1.35
Maryland.....	1,074	235,055	0.34	0.63
District of Columbia.....	92	191,723	0.25	0.42
Virginia.....	1,453	543,010	0.34	0.74
North Carolina.....	301	190,091	0.19	0.43
South Carolina.....	257	471,542	0.67	2.27
Georgia.....	364	272,935	0.26	0.67
Florida.....	66	46,375	0.33	0.86
Alabama.....	395	155,275	0.16	0.43
Mississippi.....	166	178,745	0.23	0.73
Louisiana.....	68	116,604	0.16	0.46
Arkansas.....	115	23,221	0.05	0.11
Tennessee.....	387	245,228	0.22	0.43
Kentucky.....	196	148,012	0.13	0.23
<i>The Frontier:</i>	463	322,499	0.21	0.35
Minnesota.....	89	33,649	0.20	0.30
Nebraska.....	61	10,742	0.37	0.52
Kansas.....	46	9,735	0.09	0.13
Texas.....	147	86,538	0.14	0.30
New Mexico.....	17	10,670	0.11	0.18
Utah.....	12	5,476	0.14	0.22
Washington.....	10	11,325	0.98	1.29
Oregon.....	11	5,300	0.10	0.15
California.....	70	149,064	0.39	0.58

\* Source: *Eighth Census: Mortality and Miscellaneous*, p. 505 (per capita figures computed on basis of population as reported in the same Census). No libraries were reported in Colorado, Dakota, or Nevada. These figures may be compared with those for 1929 and 1935 cited by Louis R. Wilson in *The Geography of Reading* (Chicago: American Library Association and University of Chicago Press, 1938), pp. 44-53, which are several times as large per capita.

## THE STANDARD OF LIVING IN 1860

TABLE 47\*

SUMMARY OF LIBRARY STATISTICS  
EIGHTH CENSUS, 1860

Kind of Library	Number of Libraries	Number of Volumes
Public libraries . . . . .	10,131	7,915,133
School libraries . . . . .	10,558	1,771,976
Sunday-school libraries . . . . .	6,205	2,072,489
College libraries . . . . .	222	1,025,973
Church libraries . . . . .	537	412,708
Private libraries, D.C. . . . .	77	118,100
Private libraries . . . . .	8,072	4,648,135
Private libraries, D.C. . . . .	77	118,100
Nonprivate libraries . . . . .	19,581	8,550,155
All libraries . . . . .	27,730	13,316,379

\* Source: *Eighth Census: Mortality and Miscellaneous*, pp. 502, 520. This and the other sources of library statistics are incomplete and unreliable—see above, chap. xi, esp. p. 328, n. III.

TABLE 48\*

RHEES'S ESTIMATE OF THE NUMBER AND SIZE  
OF LIBRARIES, 1859

Kind of Library	Number of Libraries	Number of Volumes
Libraries with volumes reported . . .	1,297	4,220,686
Libraries with volumes estimated . . .	1,593	500,000
Libraries of common schools . . . . .	18,000	2,000,000
Libraries of Sunday schools . . . . .	30,000	6,000,000
All libraries . . . . .	50,000	12,720,686

\* Source: Rhees, *Manual of Public Libraries*, p. xxvii.

TABLE 49\*  
PUBLIC LIBRARIES LENDING TWENTY THOUSAND OR MORE  
VOLUMES ANNUALLY, 1859

Library	City	Volumes Lent
Mercantile Library.....	New York City	160,274
Mercantile Library.....	Boston	96,000
Public library of the city.....	Boston	89,423
Maryland Institute.....	Baltimore	60,000
Apprentices' Library.....	Philadelphia	48,000
Mercantile Library.....	Philadelphia	45,000
Apprentices' Library.....	New York City	36,987
Mercantile Library.....	Cincinnati	35,000
Youths' Free Library.....	Brooklyn	30,000
Public Library.....	Newburyport	29,562
Young Men's Association.....	Buffalo	27,830
Odd Fellows' Library.....	Baltimore	27,406
Mercantile Library Association....	Baltimore	26,000
Public school library.....	Poughkeepsie	25,000
Peabody Institute.....	South Danvers	24,957
Newark Library Association.....	Newark	24,000
Young Men's Institute.....	Hartford	24,000
Free Public Library.....	New Bedford	23,240
Young Men's Association.....	Troy	20,000

\* Source: Rhees, *Manual of Public Libraries*, p. xxi. There are still other tables of library statistics on pp. xxv-xxvi.





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